美味しんぼ

32

雁屋 哲・花咲アキラ

スピリッツコミックス好評発売中

美味しんぼ（雁屋哲・花咲アキラ）…1〜32集
なぜか笑介（聖日出夫）……1〜28集
F〈エフ〉（六田登）……1〜22集
YAWARA！（浦沢直樹）……1〜19集
マドンナ（くじらいいく子）……1〜17集
ジパング少年（いわしげ孝）……1〜11集
ツルモク独身寮（窪之内英策）……1〜9集
神の左手悪魔の右手（楳図かずお）…1〜6集
男樹（本宮ひろ志）……1〜6集
出直しといで！（一色まこと）……1〜4集
天使派リョウ（狩撫麻礼・中村真理子）……1〜6集
以蔵のキモチ（佐藤宏之）……1〜3集
14歳（楳図かずお）……1〜4集
イオナ（澤井健）……1〜2集
赤い弾丸（安部譲二・岸山直）……1〜2集
りびんぐゲーム（星里もちる）……1〜2集
俺節（土田世紀）……1集

装丁／海野一雄　　カバー・フォト／菊地和男

美味しんぼ
32
新・豆腐勝負
作・雁屋 哲
画・花咲アキラ

小学館
BC2632

BIG COMICS

美味しんぼ 32

新・豆腐勝負

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小学館
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雑誌 45776—32 ◆定価500円（本体485円）

ISBN4-09-182632-6 C0379 P500E

雁屋 哲 花咲アキラ 著作集

■ビッグコミックス

美味しんぼ……Ⅰ～32集発売中

■スピリッツコミックス好評発売中／■

めぞん一刻（高橋留美子）……全15巻
妻をめとらば（柳沢きみお）……全15巻
傷追い人（小池一夫・池上遼一）……全11巻
Cryingフリーマン（小池一夫・池上遼一）……全9巻
赤い鳩〈アビル〉（小池一夫・池上遼一）……全6巻
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わたしは真悟（楳図かずお）……全10巻
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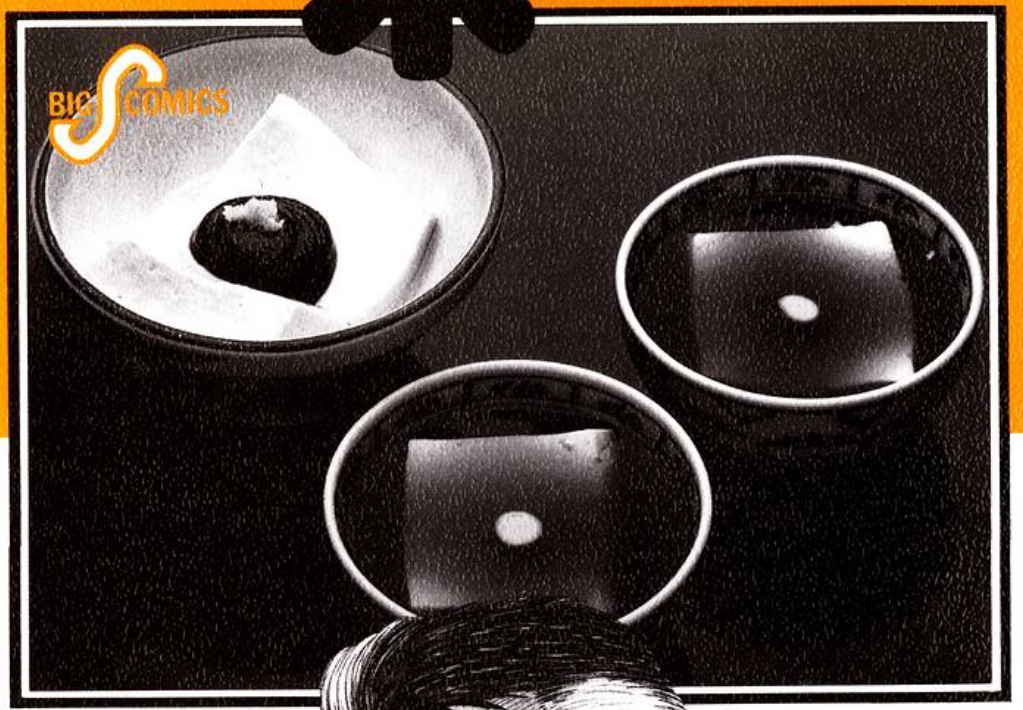
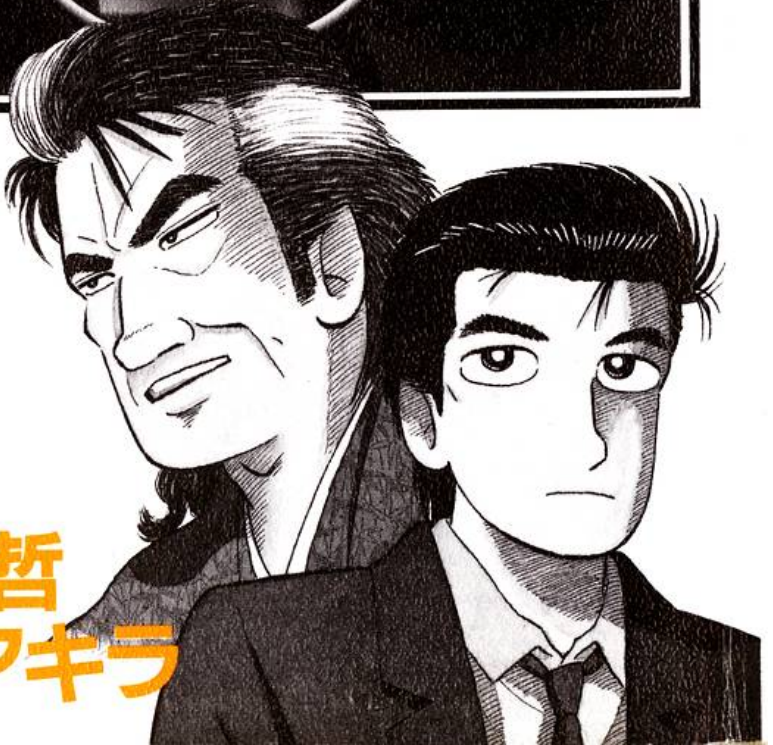
はっぱ64（山本直樹）……全3巻
キスより簡単（石坂啓）……全6巻
夢みるトマト（石坂啓）……全6巻
MONEY MOON（石坂啓）……全3巻
スローニン（吉田聡）……全4巻
両国花錦闘士（岡野玲子）……全4巻
ガルルル（むつ利之）……全2巻
ZERO（松本大洋）……全2巻
ハーフな分だけ（星里もちる）……全2巻
りざべーしょんプリーズ（細野不二彦）全2巻
あどりぶシネ倶楽部（細野不二彦）……全1巻
うにばーしてぃBOYS（細野不二彦）全1巻
かぼちゃ白書（六田登・タモツ）……全1巻
座・スターダスト（国友やすゆき）…全1巻
美紅・舞子（西村しのぶ）……全1巻
胡桃（佐藤宏之）……全1巻

美味(おい)しんぼ



32 新・豆腐勝負

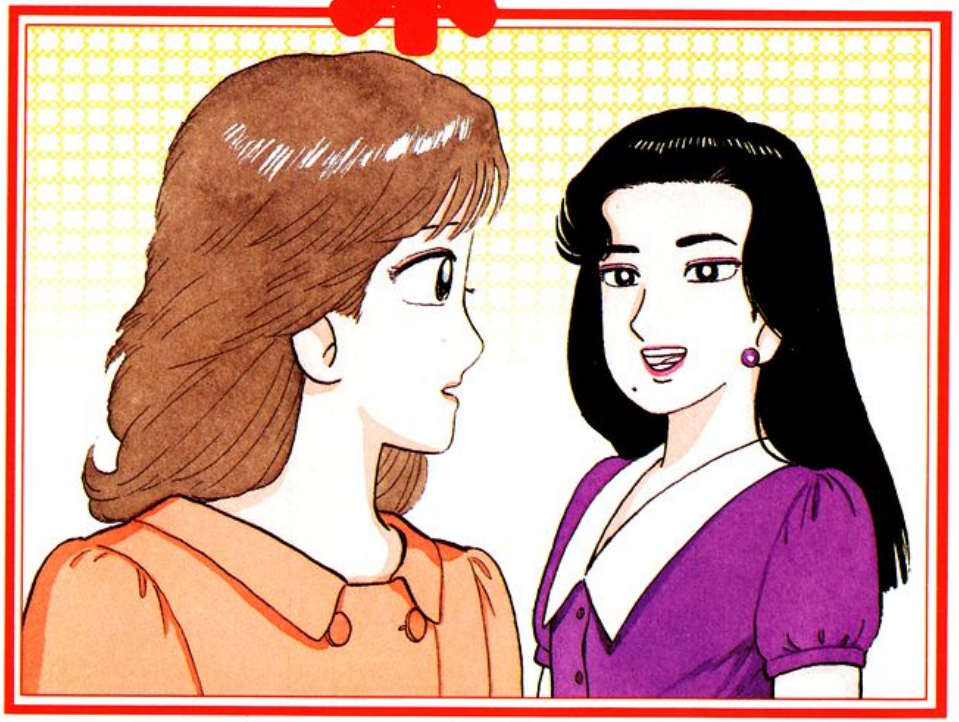


作・雁屋 哲
画・花咲アキラ

32 新・豆腐勝負

■飛龍頭。表紙は、あんかけ豆富（手前）と柚子味噌豆富（奥）。調理／笹乃雪（台東区根岸）

美味（おい）しんぼ



美味(おい)しんぼ

32 新・豆腐勝負

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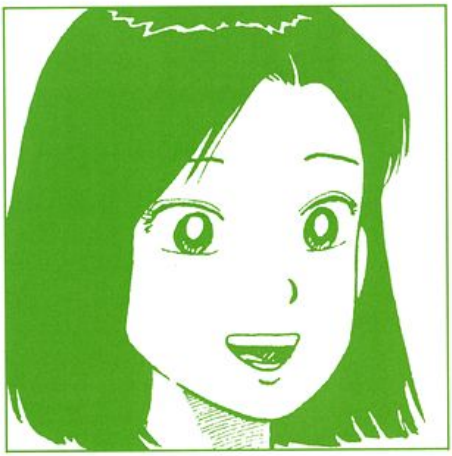


第1話
お見舞のキメ手

MS. MITANI WILL BE RETURNING TO WORK STARTING TODAY.

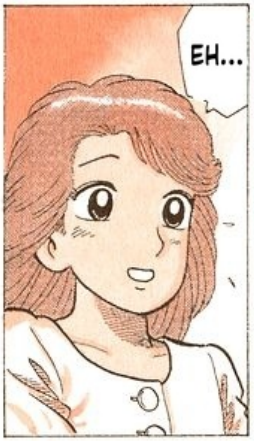
EVERYONE, I'LL BE DOING MY ABSOLUTE BEST FROM TODAY ON, SO I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.

THAT SAID, SHE'S JUST BACK FROM MATERNITY LEAVE, SO LET'S HAVE HER START SLOW AND NOT OVERDO IT.

WITH THIS, THE CULTURAL DEPARTMENT'S FLOWER TRIO IS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.
パチパチ
パチパチ

2

...ow ow


EH...

BUT NOW KURITA-SAN IS THE ONLY ONE LEFT WHO ISN'T MARRIED.

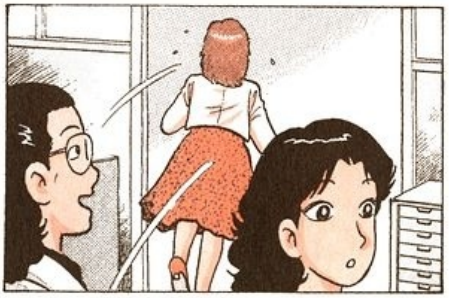
バキッ!!
MY MOTHER-IN-LAW TAKES GOOD CARE OF HIM, AND MY HUSBAND CAN KEEP AN EYE ON HIM FROM THE KITCHEN, SO I CAN WORK WITHOUT ANY WORRIES.
IS YUICHI-KUN GOING TO BE OKAY?
THEY OUGHT TO GIVE ME A HANGOVER ALLOWANCE AT THE VERY LEAST...
AH...-THIS BRAVERY, DRAGGING ONESELF TO WORK DESPITE A HANGOVER, ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THE JOB...
SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY...
プルルルル
HE TAKES AFTER ME AND MY HUSBAND, SO HE'S QUITE GOOD-LOOKING!
ほーっ
ほっほっ
YUICHI-KUN IS AT SUCH A CUTE AGE.
RIGHT!?
IT'S PRESIDENT DAN.
YES, CULTURE DEPARTMENT.
KURITA? YES, SHE'S HERE.
EH?!

WHOA! YOU MADE PLANS TO GO ON A TRIP WITH PRESIDENT DAN?!

WELL, YOU SEE, THE TRUTH IS...

I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN.
HUH? YOU'RE IN THE LOBBY RIGHT NOW?

ﾌｶﾞｧ～～...



Y-YES... UM...

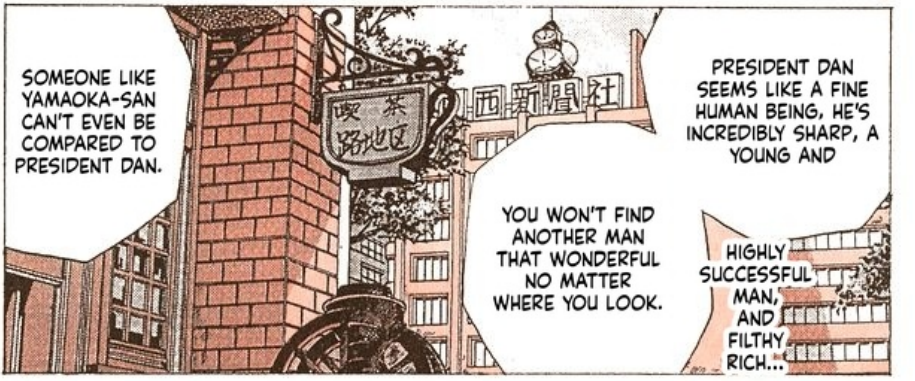
PLEASE LET MY SECRETARY KNOW LATER WHICH DATES WORK BEST FOR YOU, MS. KURITA.
IN THAT CASE, I'LL START PUTTING TOGETHER A TRAVEL ITINERARY FOR YAMAGUCHI RIGHT AWAY.

4

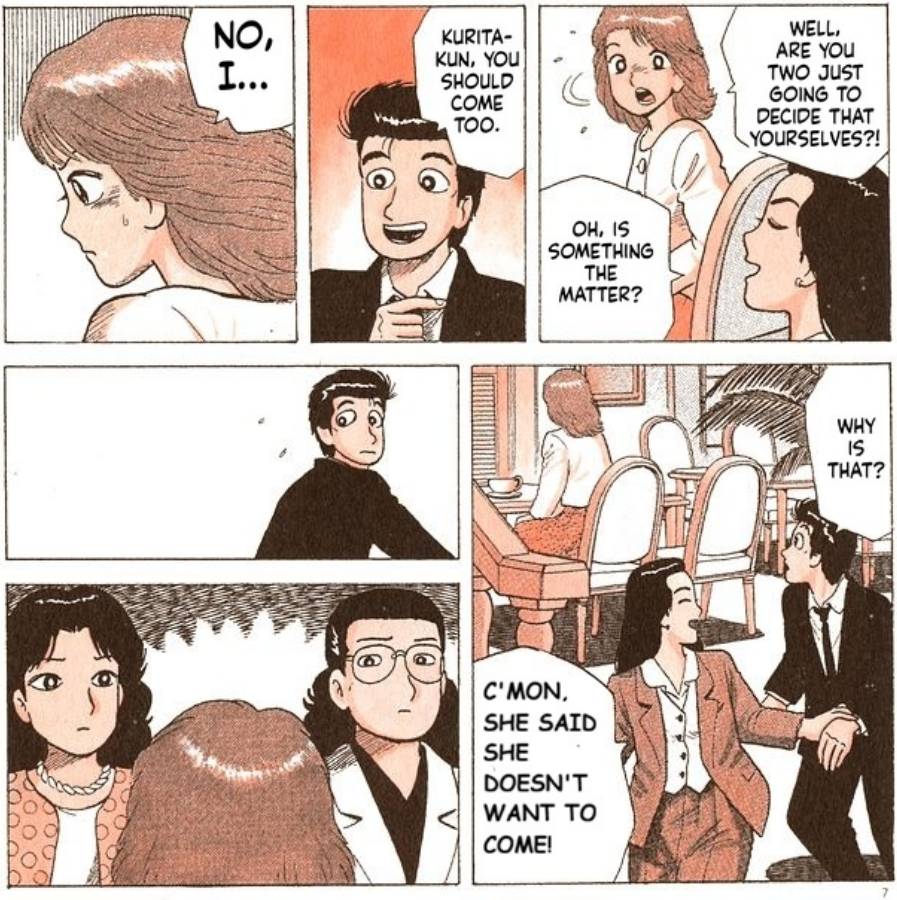
AH!

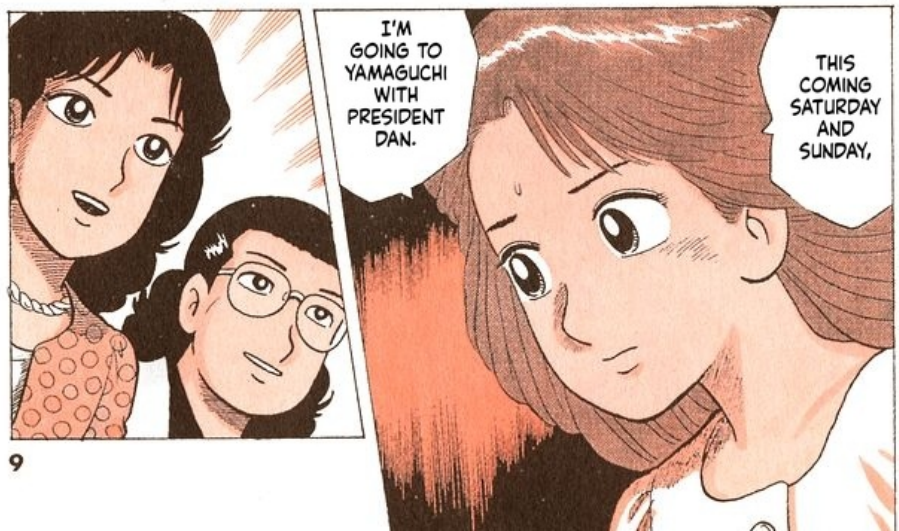
I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO BE TROUBLED ABOUT!
I'M IN TROUBLE...

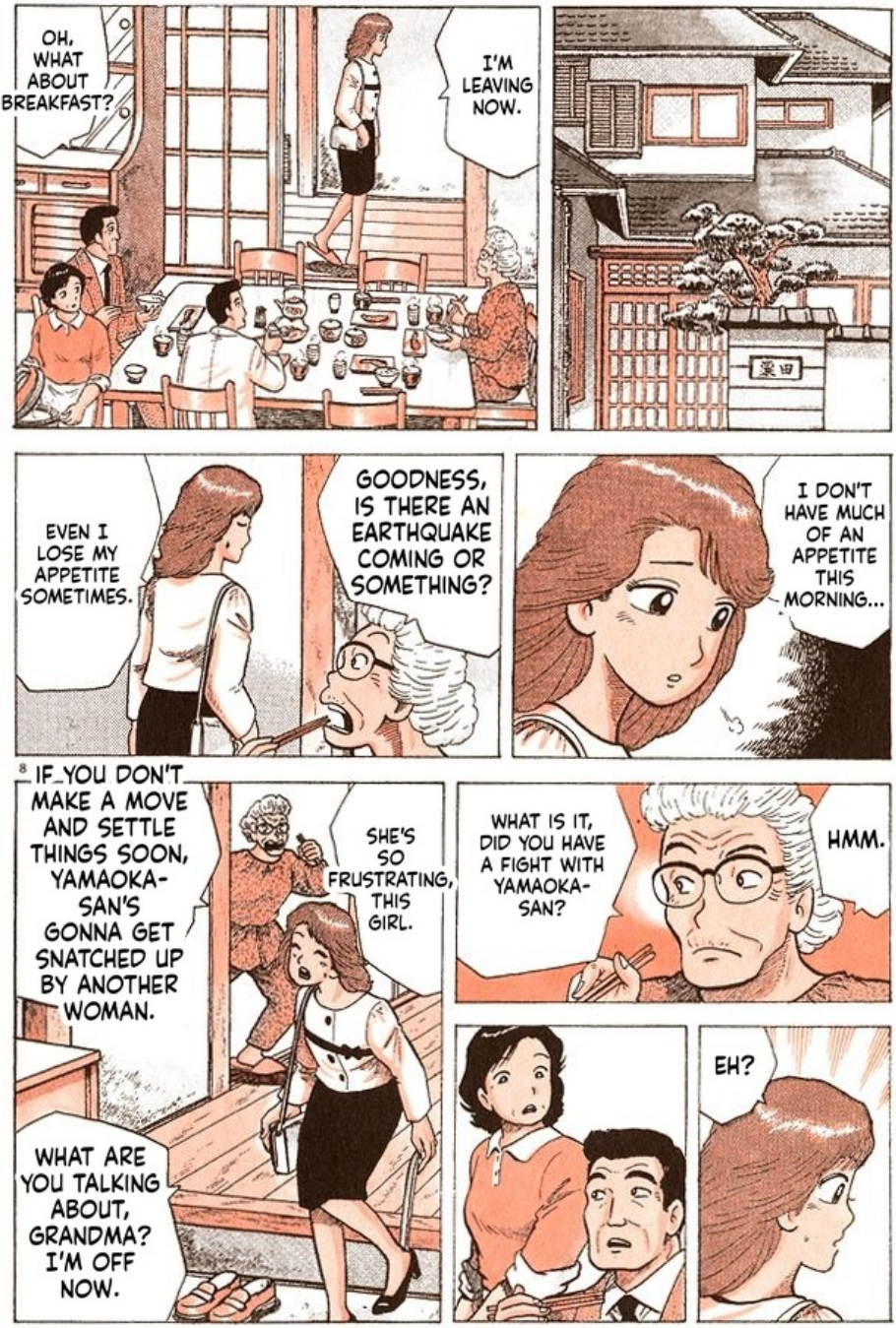
5


SOMEONE LIKE YAMAOKA-SAN CAN'T EVEN BE COMPARED TO PRESIDENT DAN.
YOU WON'T FIND ANOTHER MAN THAT WONDERFUL NO MATTER WHERE YOU LOOK.
PRESIDENT DAN SEEMS LIKE A FINE HUMAN BEING, HE'S INCREDIBLY SHARP, A YOUNG AND
HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MAN, AND FILTHY RICH...

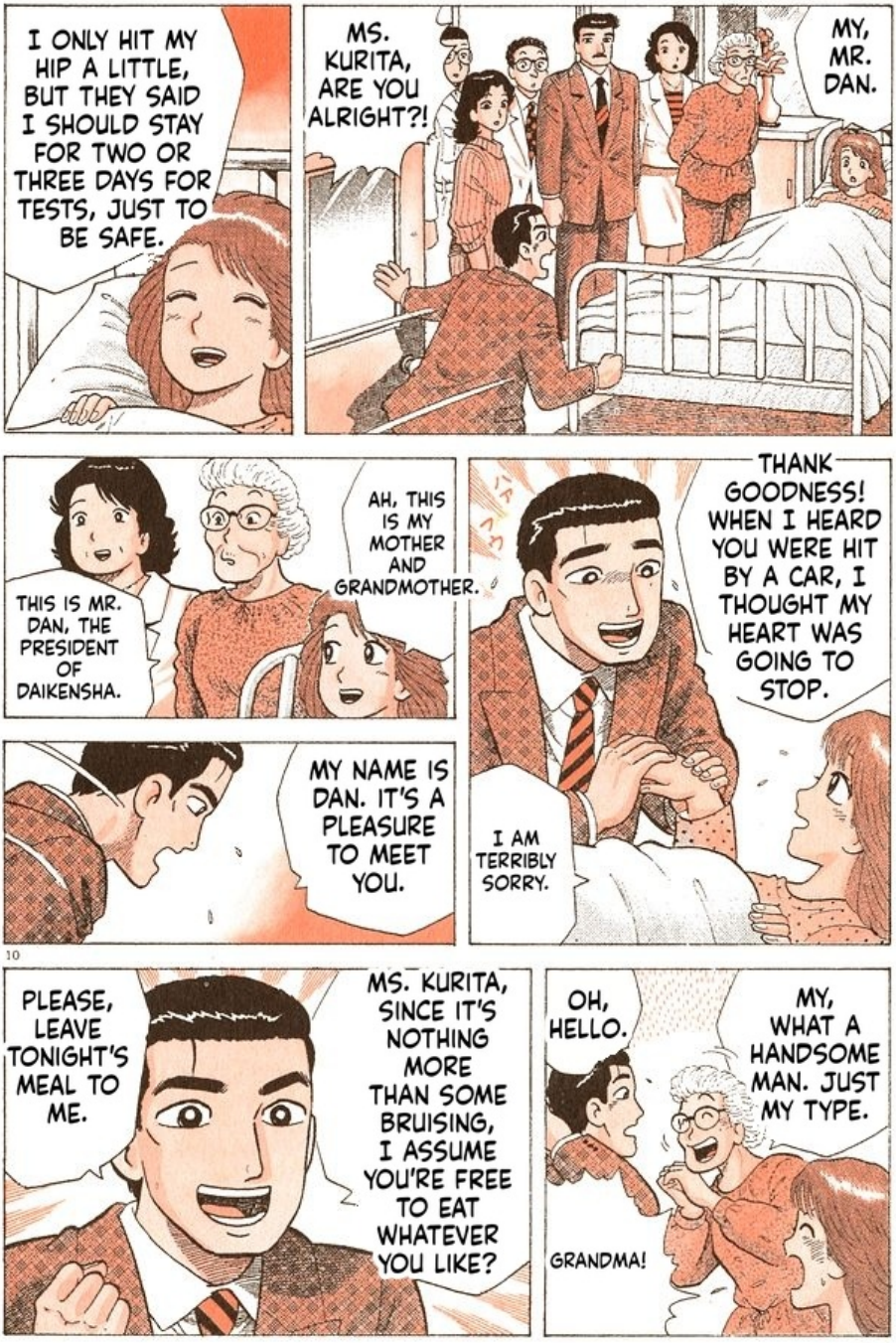
わはは
BUT...
MARIKO FUTAKI!
I'M TELLING YOU, MY FATHER IS SUCH A SCATTERBRAIN.
THAT'S A REAL RIOT.
OH, THE LADIES OF THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT, YOU'RE HERE?
6
KURITA-SAN, ONCE YAMAOKA-SAN AND I DECIDE ON THE THEME
FOR THE NEXT 'WORLD FLAVOR TOUR,' I'LL LET YOU KNOW TOO.
AREN'T WE IN A GOOD MOOD?
YOU SEEM TO BE HAVING FUN, YAMAOKA-SAN.
NO, NO, I'M AT MY HAPPIEST WHEN I'M WORKING.
.....

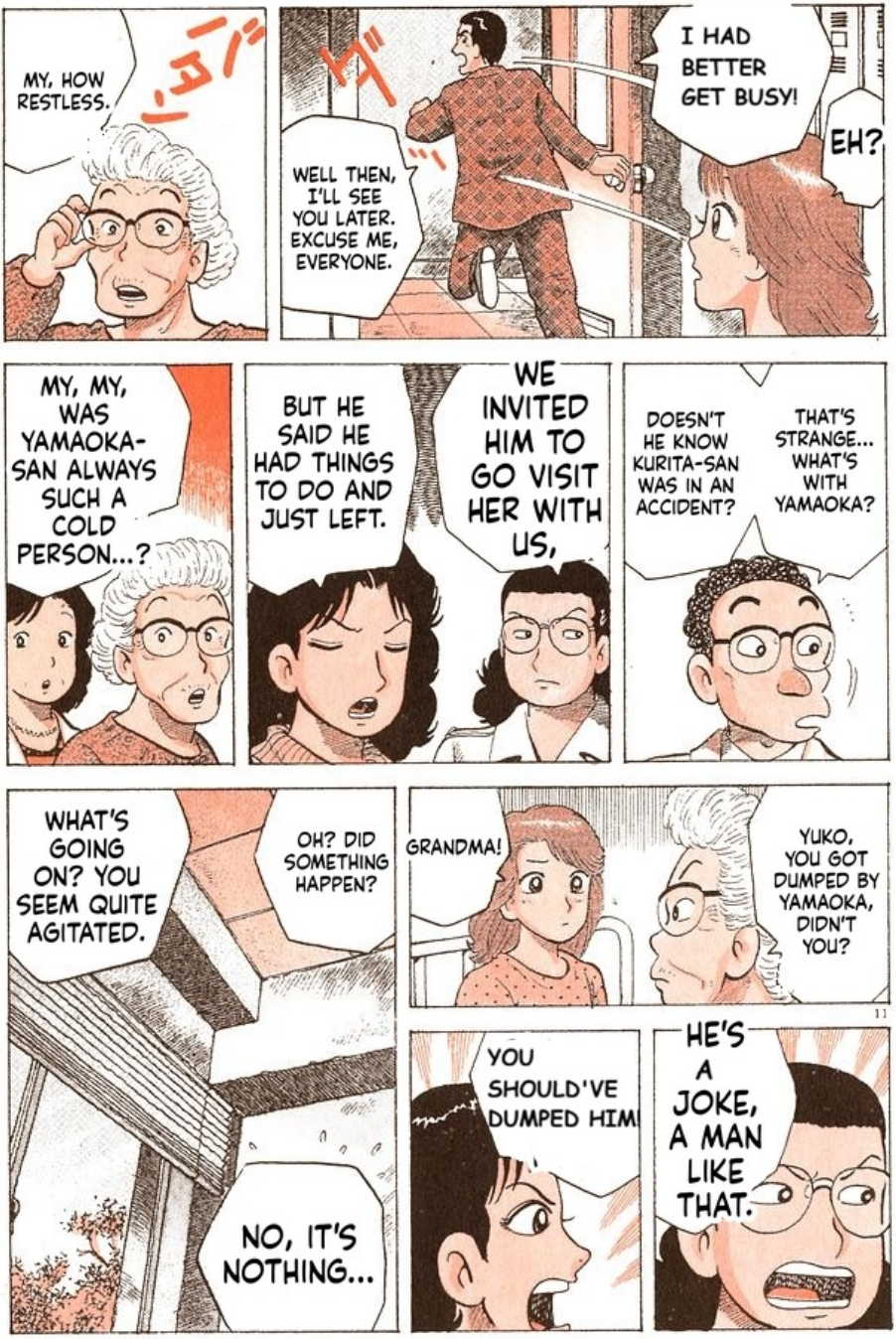

NO, I...
KURITA-KUN, YOU SHOULD COME TOO.
WELL, ARE YOU TWO JUST GOING TO DECIDE THAT YOURSELVES?!
OH, IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
WHY IS THAT?
C'MON, SHE SAID SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME!
7

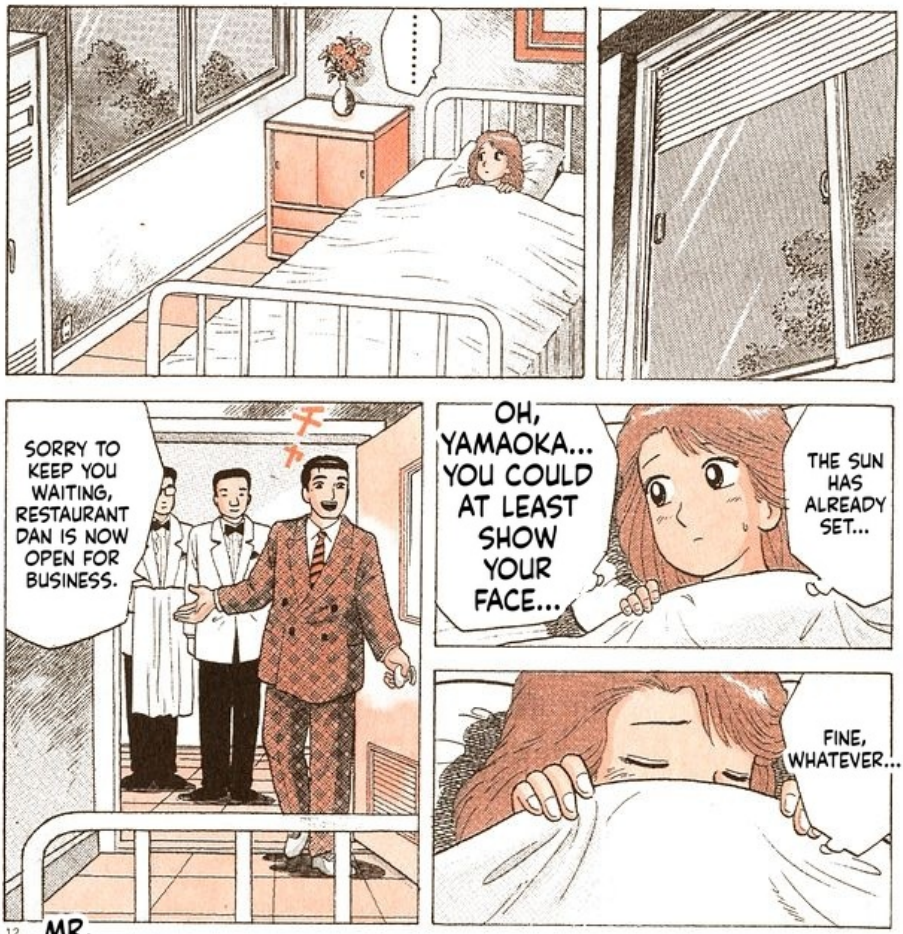

I'M GOING TO YAMAGUCHI WITH PRESIDENT DAN.
THIS COMING SATURDAY AND SUNDAY,

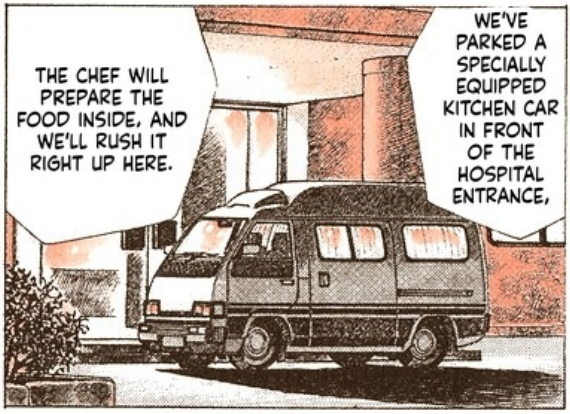

OH, WHAT ABOUT BREAKFAST?
I'M LEAVING NOW.
栗田
EVEN I LOSE MY APPETITE SOMETIMES.
GOODNESS, IS THERE AN EARTHQUAKE COMING OR SOMETHING?
I DON'T HAVE MUCH OF AN APPETITE THIS MORNING...
8 IF YOU DON'T MAKE A MOVE AND SETTLE THINGS SOON, YAMAOKA-SAN'S GONNA GET SNATCHED UP BY ANOTHER WOMAN.
SHE'S SO FRUSTRATING, THIS GIRL.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, GRANDMA? I'M OFF NOW.
WHAT IS IT, DID YOU HAVE A FIGHT WITH YAMAOKA-SAN?
HMM.
EH?

……
GRANDMA DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING, THAT'S WHY SHE SAID THOSE THINGS...
花丸商会
ブオオオオ---
キキキィィィ
9
KURITA-SAN!!!
TOUNAN HOSPITAL


I ONLY HIT MY HIP A LITTLE, BUT THEY SAID I SHOULD STAY FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS FOR TESTS, JUST TO BE SAFE.
MS. KURITA, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!
MY, MR. DAN.
THIS IS MR. DAN, THE PRESIDENT OF DAIKENSHA.
AH, THIS IS MY MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER.
MY NAME IS DAN. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
I AM TERRIBLY SORRY.
THANK GOODNESS! WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE HIT BY A CAR, I THOUGHT MY HEART WAS GOING TO STOP.
10
PLEASE, LEAVE TONIGHT'S MEAL TO ME.
MS. KURITA, SINCE IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN SOME BRUISING, I ASSUME YOU'RE FREE TO EAT WHATEVER YOU LIKE?
OH, HELLO.
MY, WHAT A HANDSOME MAN. JUST MY TYPE.
GRANDMA!


MY, HOW RESTLESS.
WELL THEN, I'LL SEE YOU LATER. EXCUSE ME, EVERYONE.
I HAD BETTER GET BUSY!
EH?
MY, MY, WAS YAMAOKA-SAN ALWAYS SUCH A COLD PERSON...?
BUT HE SAID HE HAD THINGS TO DO AND JUST LEFT.
WE INVITED HIM TO GO VISIT HER WITH US,
DOESN'T HE KNOW KURITA-SAN WAS IN AN ACCIDENT?
THAT'S STRANGE... WHAT'S WITH YAMAOKA?
WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU SEEM QUITE AGITATED.
OH? DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
NO, IT'S NOTHING...
GRANDMA!
YUKO, YOU GOT DUMPED BY YAMAOKA, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU SHOULD'VE DUMPED HIM!
HE'S A JOKE, A MAN LIKE THAT.


.....
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, RESTAURANT DAN IS NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS.
ガヤ
OH, YAMAOKA... YOU COULD AT LEAST SHOW YOUR FACE...
THE SUN HAS ALREADY SET...
FINE, WHATEVER...
12
MR. DAN, WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS...?
I'LL JUST STAY HERE AND KEEP YOU COMPANY.


THE CHEF WILL PREPARE THE FOOD INSIDE, AND WE'LL RUSH IT RIGHT UP HERE.
WE'VE PARKED A SPECIALLY EQUIPPED KITCHEN CAR IN FRONT OF THE HOSPITAL ENTRANCE,

DOIGTS D'OR,' INCLUDING THE HEAD CHEF HIMSELF, COME OUT ON LOCATION.
I HAD THE STAFF OF TOKYO'S FINEST FRENCH RESTAURANT, 'LES

THEY EVEN PRINTED A MENU JUST FOR ME...

IT'S A MENU CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR TODAY.
OH MY! TO GO THROUGH ALL THAT TROUBLE!

13

Vins
〈Bourgogne blancs〉
(ブルゴーニュの白)
Montrachet
Corton Ccarlemagne
〈Bordeaux rouges〉
(ボルドーの赤)
Château Pêtrus '70
Château Laffite Rothschild '65
〈Vin de dessert〉
(デザートワイン)
Ccâteau d'Yquem '64
Dîner dans la chambre de malade en hom
de Mademoiselle Yuko Kurita
栗田ゆう子様のための病室での晩餐会
Soupe de tortue amyda
スッポンのスープ
Salade d'écrevisse
エクルビィスのサラダ
Pigeonneau rôti êpicé à la chinoise
中華風香りつけ小鳩のロースト
Ormeau grillé et steak de boeuf rouge de Tossa
アワビと土佐赤牛のステーキ
Ris de veau grillé lustré
リドボーの照り焼き
Sorbets de mangoustan et de champagne
マンゴスチンとシャンペンのシャーベット
Fraises chocolat

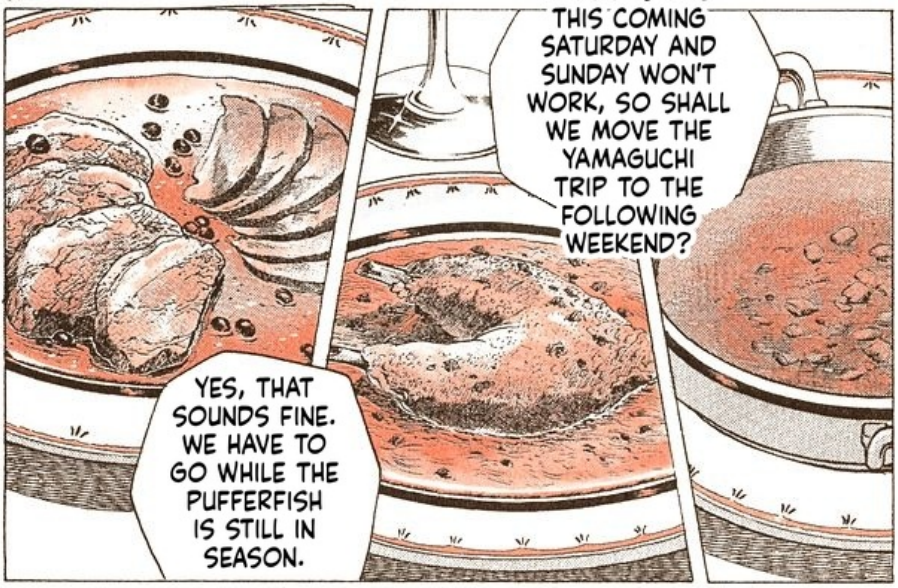
DON'T WORRY, THE PORTIONS FOR EACH DISH ARE SMALL. I WANTED YOU TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY A VARIETY OF FLAVORS.
THIS IS SO LUXURIOUS! AND THERE'S SO MUCH OF IT!

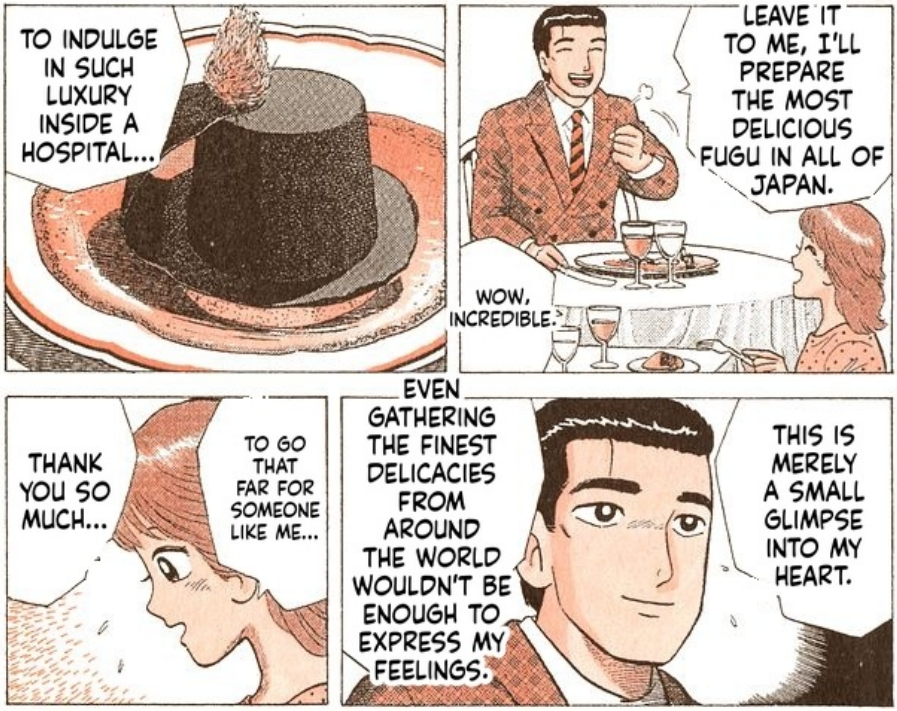
CHEERS.
THEN, LET'S TOAST TO YOUR GOOD FORTUNE IN ESCAPING WITH ONLY MINOR INJURIES.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

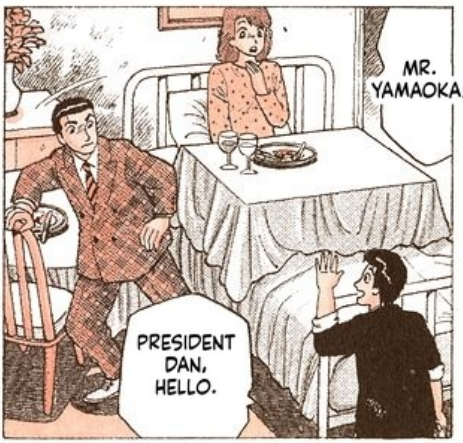
AMAZING!
THE CHAMPAGNE IS KRUG.

14

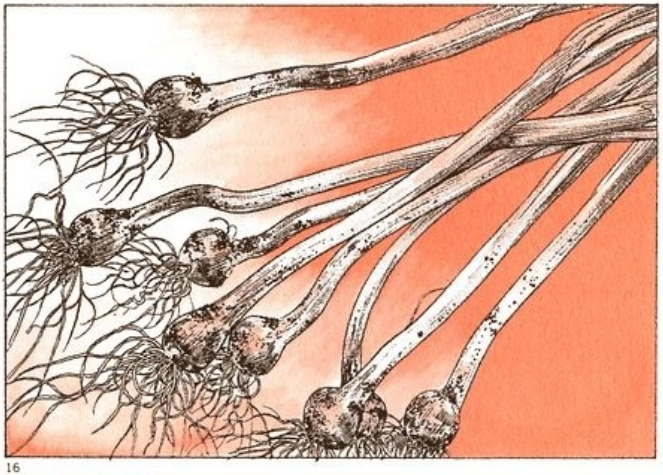

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS COMING SATURDAY AND SUNDAY WON'T WORK, SO SHALL WE MOVE THE YAMAGUCHI TRIP TO THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND?
YES, THAT SOUNDS FINE. WE HAVE TO GO WHILE THE PUFFERFISH IS STILL IN SEASON.


TO INDULGE IN SUCH LUXURY INSIDE A HOSPITAL...
LEAVE IT TO ME, I'LL PREPARE THE MOST DELICIOUS FUGU IN ALL OF JAPAN.
WOW, INCREDIBLE.
THANK YOU SO MUCH...
TO GO THAT FAR FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME...
EVEN GATHERING THE FINEST DELICACIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH TO EXPRESS MY FEELINGS.
THIS IS MERELY A SMALL GLIMPSE INTO MY HEART.
バアン
YO.
YUKO-SAN.
KURITA-SAN...
15

BUT I HEARD IT WASN'T ANYTHING TOO SERIOUS.
THAT WAS QUITE A DISASTER.


MR. YAMAOKA!
PRESIDENT DAN, HELLO.

YES, IT SEEMS SO.



THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
HERE, I WENT AND PICKED SOME FOR YOU.

16

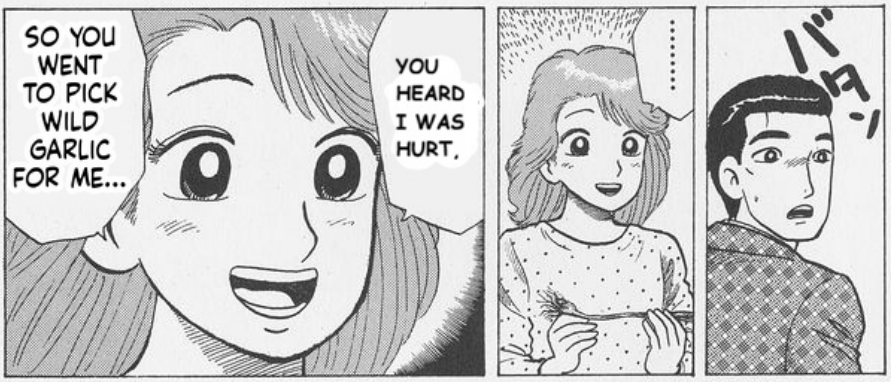
WHERE DID YOU GET THIS...?
I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT LAST YEAR, DIDN'T I? MY SECRET SPOT.

YOU REMEMBERED! THIS'LL REALLY GIVE YOU SOME STAMINA.
IF YOU WANT TO BUILD UP YOUR STRENGTH THIS TIME OF YEAR, THIS IS THE STUFF.

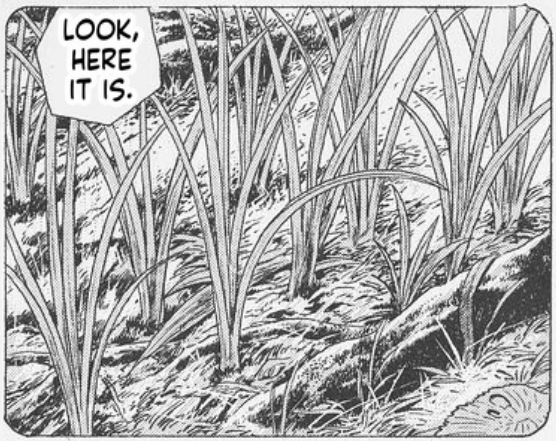
OH, THIS IS...
ROCAMBOLE...
WILD ROCAMBOLE!

JUST WAIT, I'M GONNA BORROW THE PANTRY FOR A BIT AND COOK THESE UP.
I MEANT TO GET HERE SOONER, BUT THERE WASN'T MUCH THIS YEAR, SO I ENDED UP SEARCHING ALL OVER THE PLACE.
WHAT! YOU WENT ALL THE WAY INTO THE MOUNTAINS OF HAYAMA!?

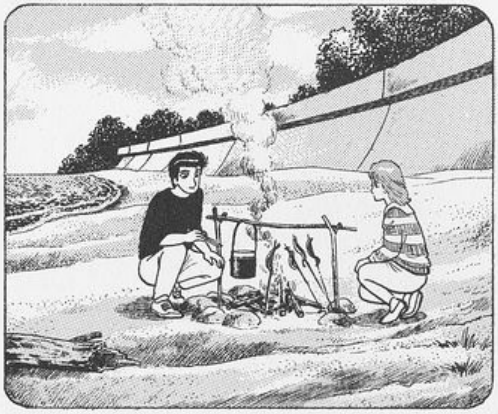
17

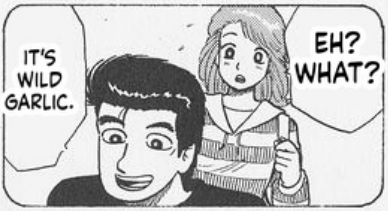

SO YOU WENT TO PICK WILD GARLIC FOR ME...
YOU HEARD I WAS HURT.
.....
バタン

WHAT IF A BEAR SHOWS UP!?
GEEZ... WHY DO WE HAVE TO COME TO A PLACE LIKE THIS!?
PFFFT!
HAH! IF YOU FOUND A BEAR ON THE MIURA PENINSULA, YOU COULD PRESENT IT TO THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.


LOOK, HERE IT IS.

I'M DONE, I'M EXHAUSTED.
YOU'RE A REAL COMPLAINER, AREN'T YOU? JUST KEEP WALKING.



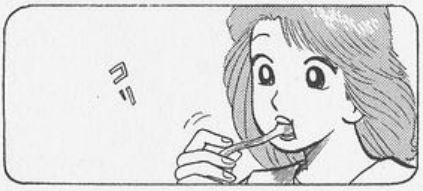

IT'S WILD GARLIC.
EH? WHAT?

WILD GARLIC?

DIP IT IN THIS AND GIVE IT A TASTE.
AND HERE IS THE VINEGARED MISO I PREPARED EARLIER.

JUST GIVE THE NOBILIS ROOTS A QUICK PARBOIL.

18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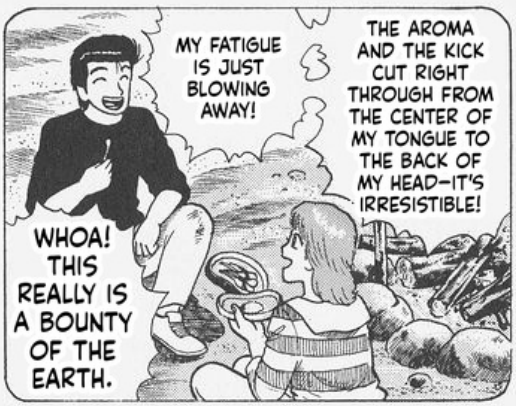
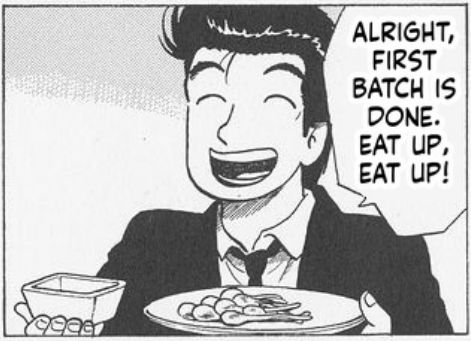
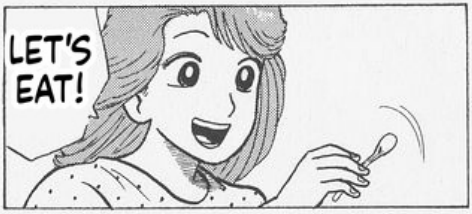

WHOA! THIS REALLY IS A BOUNTY OF THE EARTH.
MY FATIGUE IS JUST BLOWING AWAY!
THE AROMA AND THE KICK CUT RIGHT THROUGH FROM THE CENTER OF MY TONGUE TO THE BACK OF MY HEAD—IT'S IRRESISTIBLE!

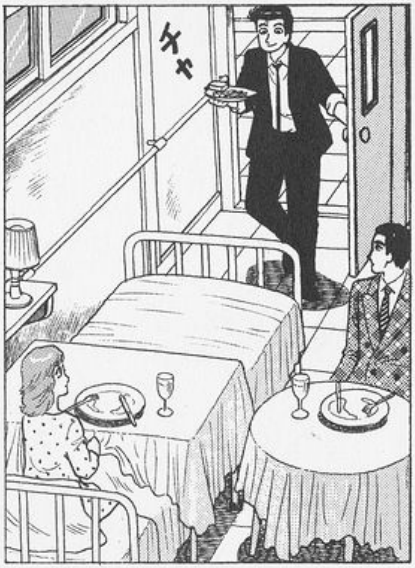
WOW!
IT'S LIKE A SHALLOT, BUT THE FLAVOR IS SO MUCH MORE VIVID!

YEAH, IT'S OUR LITTLE SECRET.

IT'S A SECRET.
DON'T TELL ANYONE WHERE THOSE WILD LEEKS ARE.


ALRIGHT, FIRST BATCH IS DONE. EAT UP, EAT UP!


LET'S EAT!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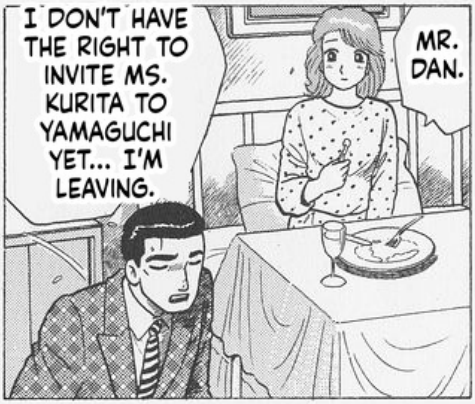
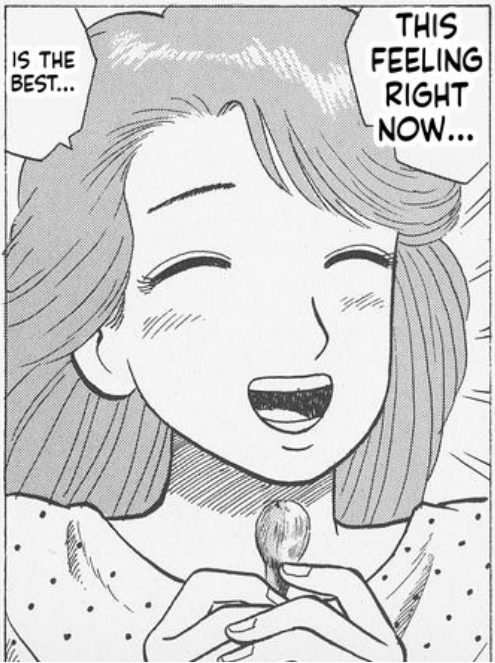
WELL, YOU CAN EAT THEM RAW, BUT BLANCHING THEM SLIGHTLY BRINGS OUT THE SWEETNESS.
IF YOU COOK THEM TOO LONG, THEY GET SOGGY AND LOSE THEIR FLAVOR.
WOW, THIS IS THE TASTE! I FEEL REVITALIZED!
WHAT?! THIS IS THE BREATH OF EARLY SPRING!
NONSENSE, JUST CRUNCH ON SOME WILD GARLIC AND HAVE A DRINK, AND YOUR FATIGUE WILL VANISH.
YOU'RE COVERED IN MUD... YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.
MR. YAMAOKA, THANK YOU.
.....
AH, IT'S DELICIOUS!
MS. KURITA, LET'S POSTPONE THE TRIP TO YAMAGUCHI INDEFINITELY.
EH?
PRESIDENT DAN, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TOO?
20
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THE TRIP TO YAMAGUCHI?

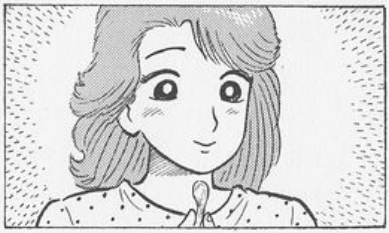
THIS TIME, IT'S MY LOSS.
I RELIED ON MONEY AND POWER TO BRING AN ENTIRE RESTAURANT AND ITS CHEF HERE,
BUT A SINGLE WILD ONION COVERED IN SWEAT AND MUD WAS FAR MORE VALUABLE.

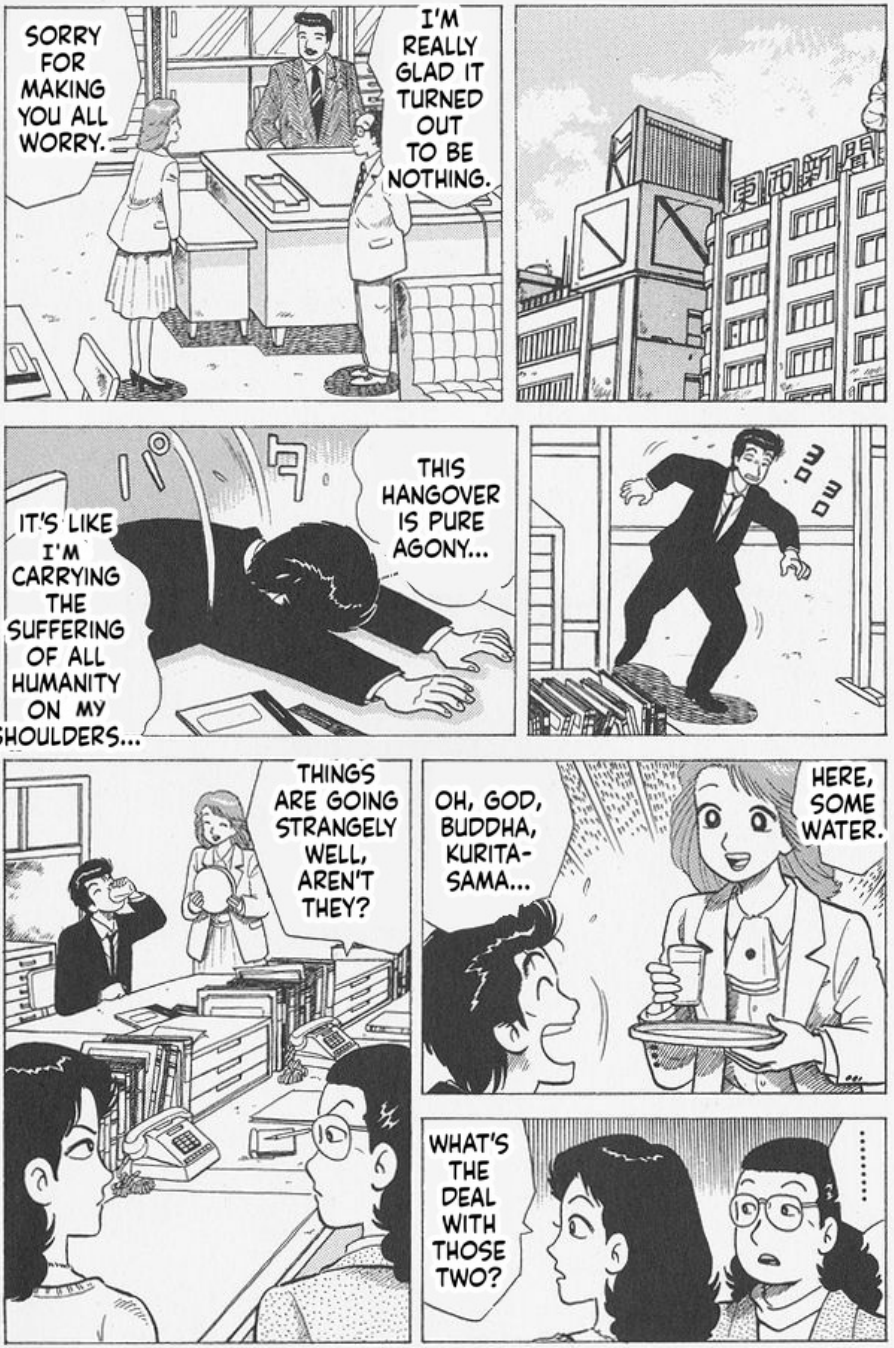
WAIT, PRESIDENT DAN, WHAT'S WRONG? DO YOU REALLY HATE WILD ONIONS THAT MUCH?


MR. DAN.
I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO INVITE MS. KURITA TO YAMAGUCHI YET... I'M LEAVING.


THIS FEELING RIGHT NOW...
IS THE BEST...

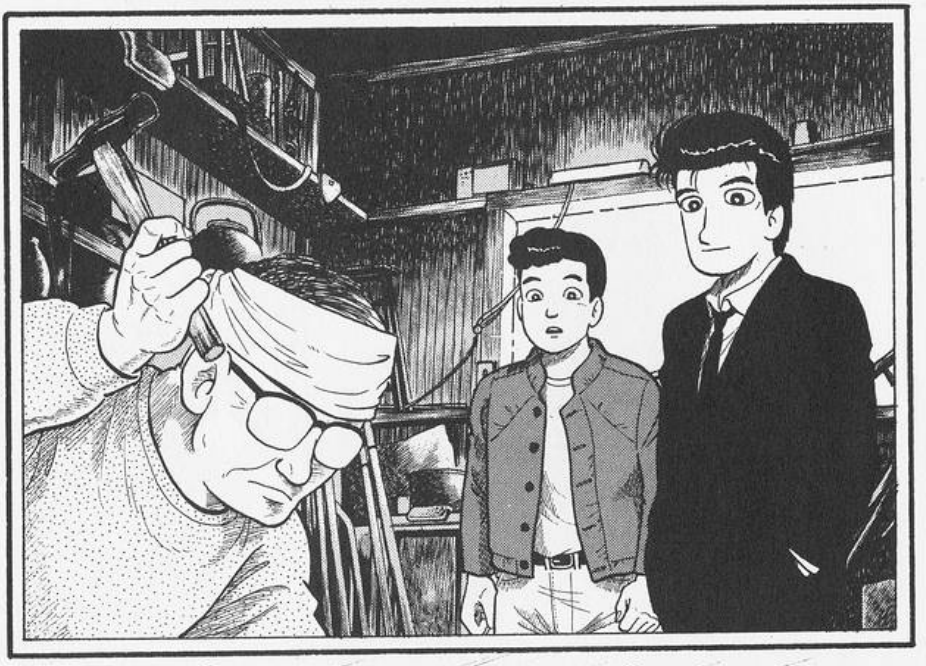
IS THE SCENT A BIT TOO STRONG...?
バタン!
IT'S OKAY, YAMAOKA-SAN.

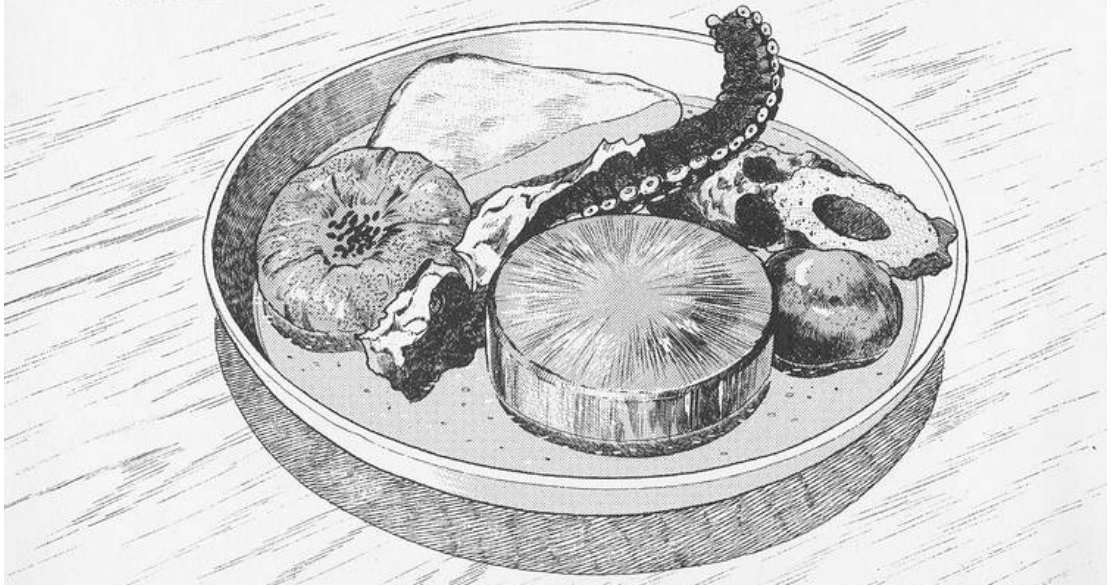




I'M REALLY GLAD IT TURNED OUT TO BE NOTHING.
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU ALL WORRY.
THIS HANGOVER IS PURE AGONY...
IT'S LIKE I'M CARRYING THE SUFFERING OF ALL HUMANITY ON MY SHOULDERS...
HERE, SOME WATER.
OH, GOD, BUDDHA, KURITA-SAMA...
THINGS ARE GOING STRANGELY WELL, AREN'T THEY?
.....
WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THOSE TWO?

第2話
道具の心





OH, KURITA-KUN, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FINGER?
MORNING.
GOOD MORNING!
東西劇団社
MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO GET AN EXORCISM OR SOMETHING.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING.
YOU'VE BEEN HAVING A RUN OF BAD LUCK LATELY, KURITA-SAN.
FIRST BEING HIT BY A CAR AND NOW THIS?
I WAS USING A KNIFE, AND MY HAND SLIPPED...
...EH?
2
ANOTHER PERSON I KNOW CUT THEIR FINGER TOO, AND WHEN THEY GOT AN ANTIBIOTIC SHOT JUST TO BE SAFE, THEY WENT INTO ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK AND DIED.
SOMEONE I KNOW GOT AN INFECTION FROM A FINGER CUT WHILE USING A KITCHEN KNIFE, AND THEY ENDED UP DYING.

バッタリ
I-I WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT PRECAUTIONS, EVEN FOR A FINGER INJURY...
WELL, AREN'T YOU JUST A RAY OF SUNSHINE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!
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ひえっ
ANOTHER GUY HAD MUSHROOMS GROWING OUT OF HIS WOUND...
BUT SHARPENING KNIVES IS SO DIFFICULT... I CAN'T GET THEM LIKE A PROFESSIONAL CHEF'S.
THEY SAY A DULL KNIFE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A SHARP ONE, AND IT'S TRUE.
THE KNIFE WOULDN'T CUT WELL, SO I PUT SOME FORCE INTO IT AND MY HAND SLIPPED.
3
HMM... COOKING UTENSILS, HUH...
TO CREATE THE DISHES FOR THE 'ULTIMATE MENU,' THERE WILL SURELY BE TIMES WHEN WE HAVE TO CONSIDER THE COOKING UTENSILS FIRST.
THE 'ULTIMATE MENU' PROJECT IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT I'VE ONLY BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS AND THE FINISHED DISHES.
I'VE BEEN COMPLETELY NEGLIGENT WHEN IT COMES TO THE TOOLS USED TO MAKE THE FOOD.
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THEN IT SUDDENLY DAWNED ON ME.

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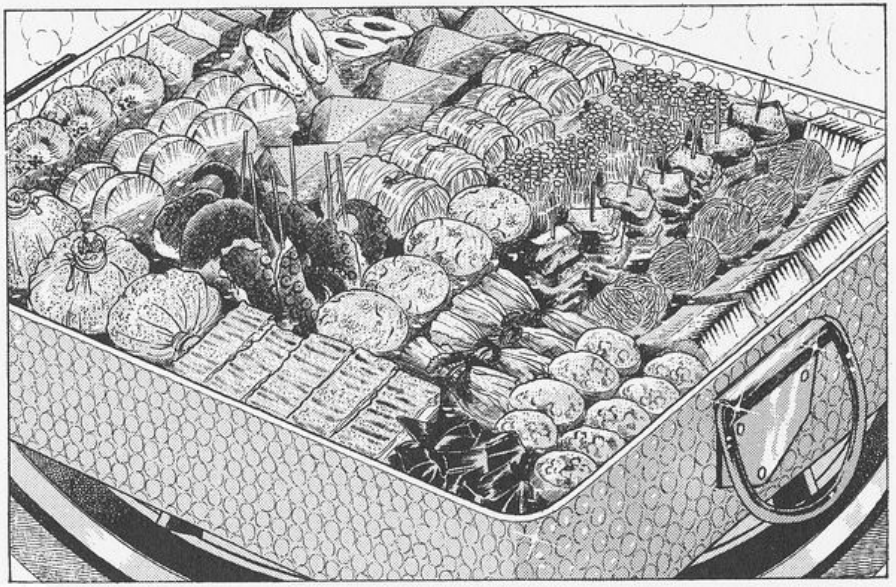
EXACTLY, EXACTLY...
WHAT DO YOU THINK, YAMAOKA-SAN?
I WAS JUST CHECKING TO SEE IF I WAS IN THE SHOT.
THIS PHOTO SHOWS THE SPECTATOR STANDS RIGHT AROUND WHERE I WAS SITTING.
LOOK, I WENT TO SEE THAT RUGBY MATCH YESTERDAY.
WHAT ARE YOU READING SO INTENTLY?
GOOD GRIEF! I'M TRYING TO TALK BUSINESS AND YOU'RE SPACING OUT, OBSESSED WITH SOMETHING SO STUPID!
4
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT GIVE ME A BREAK!
WAAAAH!
WE'VE BEEN TOO NICE TO YOU!
パキ
ポキ
ガタ
GUESS IT'S TIME TO SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL.

SHUT UP! THE WRATH OF THE LADIES IN THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT IS MY WRATH!
WHY THE HELL DO I HAVE TO TREAT YOU?! YOU MAKE MORE MONEY THAN ME!

GETTING TREATED TO DINNER BY YAMAOKA... THIS IS A HISTORIC EVENT!
GINGATA

DAMMIT -YOU THIEF!

5



SEE? THAT'S WHY I WON'T BE SATISFIED TONIGHT UNLESS HE TREATS ME TO A REAL FEAST.
WELL, THAT'S YOUR OWN FAULT, YAMAOKA-SAN. YOU WERE SPACING OUT WHILE SHE WAS TRYING TO TALK ABOUT IMPORTANT BUSINESS.

I'LL MAKE SURE TO SERVE SOMETHING INCREDIBLY EXPENSIVE.
DON'T YOU WORRY, WE CAN PREPARE PLENTY OF DISHES BESIDES JUST ODEN.

I'LL HAVE TO MAKE HIM TREAT ME TO SOMETHING EXPENSIVE, LIKE STEAK OR SUSHI.
BUT YOU KNOW, ODEN IS JUST WAY TOO CHEAP.

6

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POPS! I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON MY SIDE!

NO, I'M ON THE SIDE OF WHOEVER SPENDS THE MOST MONEY.
YOU THIEF!

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TAKASHI! THE POT!
WAIT... THIS SMELL...
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YOU IDIOT!
IF YOU LET IT BOIL DRY, THE POT'LL BE RUINED!
ガコン
ARE YOU STUPID?!
....

HE HATES ODEN?
I'D LIKE HIM TO TAKE OVER THE SHOP, BUT HE SAYS HE HATES ODEN...
YES... HE'S TURNING TWENTY.
YOUR SON?
ODEN HAS ITS OWN SPECIAL CHARM, DOESN'T IT?
NO WAY...
I SUPPOSE ODEN ISN'T 'COOL' ENOUGH FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS...
8
D-DAMMIT!
IDIOT, I WAS JUST CHEERING EVERYONE UP. YOU'RE THE ONE PAYING.
EAT AS MUCH AS YOUR HEART DESIRES!
COME ON EVERYONE, EAT UP, EAT UP!
EH! THANK YOU, IS IT ON YOU, DEPUTY MANAGER?!

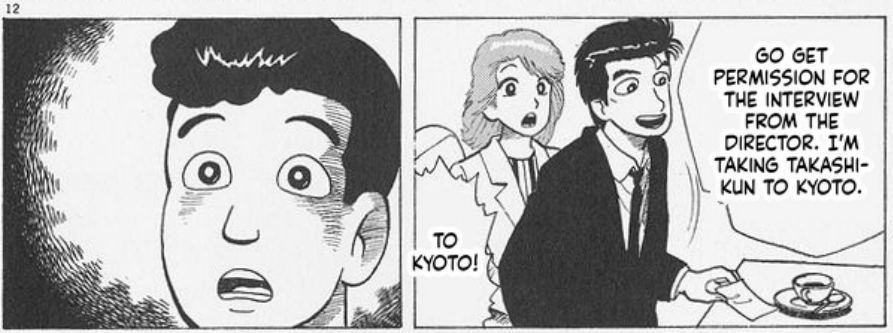
EH?
YES, THIS IS THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT.
?
YAMAOKA-SAN, YOU HAVE SOME VISITORS HERE TO SEE YOU.
OH MY...
9
WE WERE TOLD YOU WANTED SOME ADVICE.
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
YES...

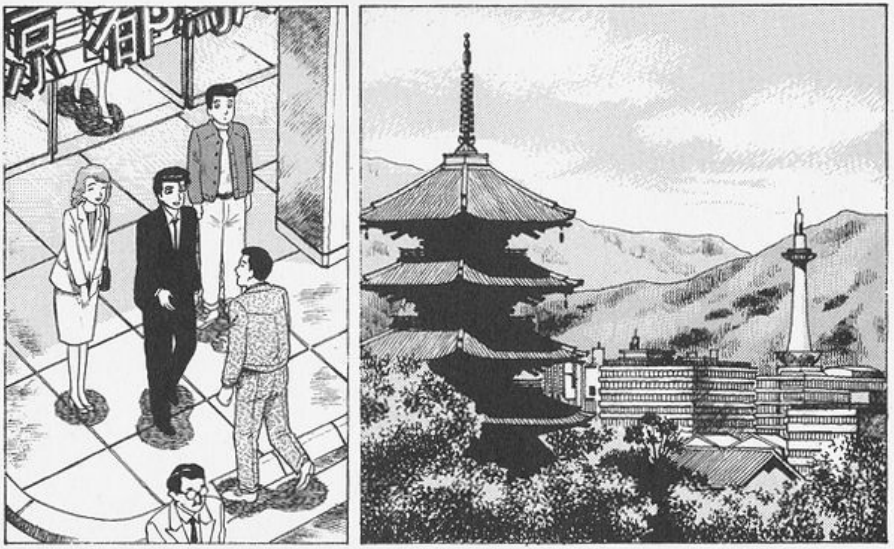
YOU MUST HAVE A LOT OF CONNECTIONS IN THE CULINARY WORLD.
I FIGURED SINCE YOU TWO ARE IN CHARGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE MENU'...
SO, YOU WANT TO STUDY FRENCH COOKING...
AQUA
coffee
I WANT TO STUDY UNDER A TOP-TIER CHEF AND LEARN FRENCH CUISINE.
PLEASE. INTRODUCE ME TO A GOOD RESTAURANT WHERE I CAN APPRENTICE.
10
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. ODEN HAS A LONG HISTORY, SURE, BUT I WOULDN'T CALL IT OUTDATED OR UNCOOL.
OLD-FASHIONED AND TACKY?
FRENCH CUISINE IS MUCH BETTER!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ODEN?
BUT WHY FRENCH CUISINE?
ODEN IS JUST... IT'S SO OLD-FASHIONED AND TACKY.

THAT'S NOT TRUE! FRENCH CUISINE IS WAY COOLER THAN STUFF LIKE ODEN!
HMM... IT SEEMS YOU'RE MISUNDERSTANDING SOMETHING.
YAMAOKA-SAN...
UNDERSTOOD. I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO A SKILLED FRENCH CHEF.
SO, YOU'VE MADE UP YOUR MIND TO MAKE A LIVING AS A CHEF.
YES, I LOVE COOKING.
I'M GOING TO TEST JUST HOW SHARP YOUR SENSIBILITIES REALLY ARE.
WHAT A CHEF NEEDS ARE SHARP AND DELICATE NERVES.
BUT BEFORE THAT, YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE A TEST.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
11
A TEST?

RESEARCHING COOKING UTENSILS?!
THIS IS THE FIRST STEP IN THAT RESEARCH.
I TOLD YOU, YOU HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION NOT JUST TO THE INGREDIENTS AND THE FINISHED DISH, BUT TO THE TOOLS AS WELL.
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?
Y-YES, SIR...

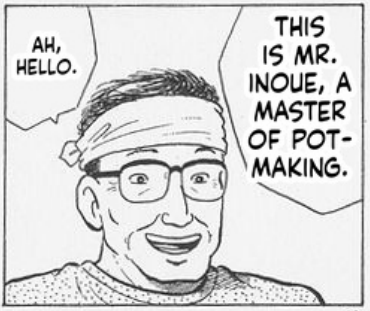
12


TO KYOTO!
GO GET PERMISSION FOR THE INTERVIEW FROM THE DIRECTOR. I'M TAKING TAKASHI-KUN TO KYOTO.



I HEARD YOU WANTED TO SEE SOME POTS TODAY.
MY SHOP CARRIES POTS, KETTLES, CHOPSTICKS, AND ALL SORTS OF THINGS,
ARITSUGU CO., LTD.
THIS IS MR. TERAKUBO, THE SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR OF 'ARITSUGU,' A LONG-ESTABLISHED SPECIALTY COOKWARE STORE IN KYOTO.
THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY.

AH, SURE THING.
MR. INOUE, I'D LIKE YOU TO SHOW US HOW YOU MAKE YOUR POTS.


AH, HELLO.
THIS IS MR. INOUE, A MASTER OF POT-MAKING.

13

AND HIS ASSISTANT, YAMADA-KUN.

AN ODEN POT...!
ALRIGHT, LET'S GET STARTED ON THE ODEN POT.
ONCE YOU'VE TRACED THE PATTERN, YOU CUT IT WITH SHEARS.
HEATING IT AND LETTING IT COOL NATURALLY IS CALLED 'ANNEALING.' ANNEALING MAKES THE COPPER PLATE SOFT AND EASIER TO WORK WITH.
WE'RE USING 3MM THICK COPPER PLATES FOR THE MATERIAL.
14
AND NEXT, YOU APPLY THE GLUE TO THOSE SEAMS.
WHEN I SAY 'GLUE,' IT'S ACTUALLY BORAX MIXED WITH COPPER AND TIN POWDER, DISSOLVED IN WATER.
THEN YOU FOLD IT INTO THE SHAPE OF A POT.
CLEAN UP THE SEAMS.
カン
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YOU BEND THE TABS AT THE SEAMS, THEN FLATTEN THEM OUT WITH A HAMMER,

COPPER AND TIN MELT TO FORM AN ALLOY —THAT'S BRONZE. THE BRONZE FILLS THE GAPS AND JOINS THE PIECES TOGETHER.
THE SHELF SAND IS JUST A BINDER; IT'LL MELT AND FLOW AWAY WITH THE HEAT.
THEN WE HEAT IT WITH FIRE.
カン カン カン カン
WE WASH THE SURFACE WITH SULFURIC ACID TO CLEAN IT UP.
ALRIGHT, HERE WE GO.
NOW COMES THE CRITICAL MOMENT.
フゥ…
15
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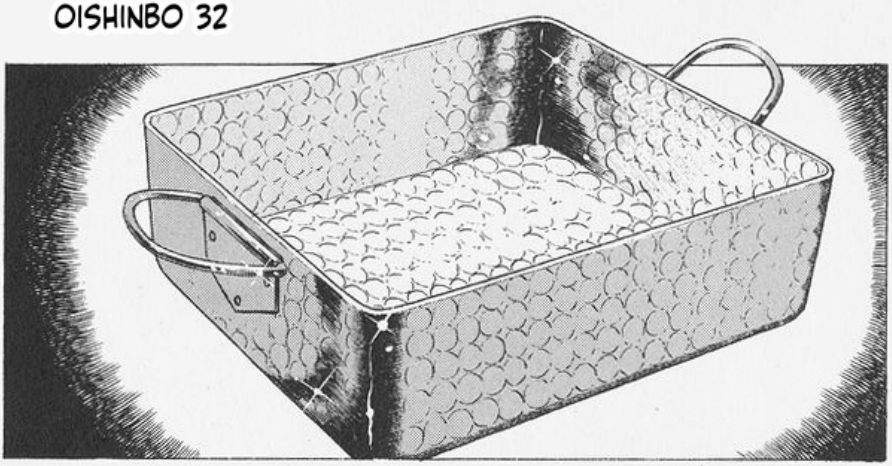
BLOCK OF PURE COPPER, RADIATING POWER FROM THE INSIDE OUT!
BUT NOW IT'S TRANSFORMED —IT HAS TENSION AND SMOOTHNESS AS IF CARVED FROM A SOLID
THE BODY IS SWELLING BEAUTIFULLY, TAKING ON THE SHAPE OF A PERFECTLY BALANCED POT!
IT STARTED AS NOTHING MORE THAN A ROUGH PROTOTYPE OF A POT,
IF YOU DON'T HAMMER WHILE CALCULATING EVERY MOVE, IT'LL END UP LOPSIDED AND WARPED BEYOND REPAIR.
STRETCHING ONE AREA BY HAMMERING CREATES DISTORTION IN ANOTHER.
AMAZING...!
16
FURTHERMORE, THE COPPER PLATE— SOFTENED BY ANNEALING— BECOMES HARD AGAIN AS SOON AS YOU STRIKE IT.
ONCE THE HANDLE IS ATTACHED AND THE INSIDE IS LINED WITH TIN,
AND AFTER WASHING THE SURFACE, IT'S FINISHED.
IT'S A ONE-SHOT DEAL.
THAT'S WHY YOU CAN'T JUST START OVER IF YOU MESS UP A SINGLE STRIKE.



I CAN'T TREAT THIS CARELESSLY...
THIS IS A WORK OF ART...

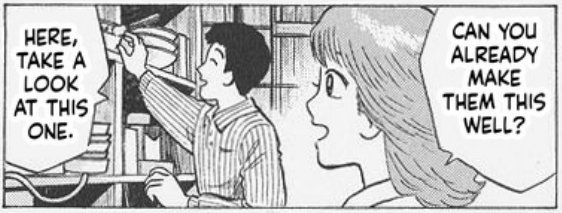
T-THIS... THIS IS THE SAME TYPE OF POT WE USE AT MY SHOP.
OH? SO YOUR PLACE IS ONE OF OUR CUSTOMERS, THEN?

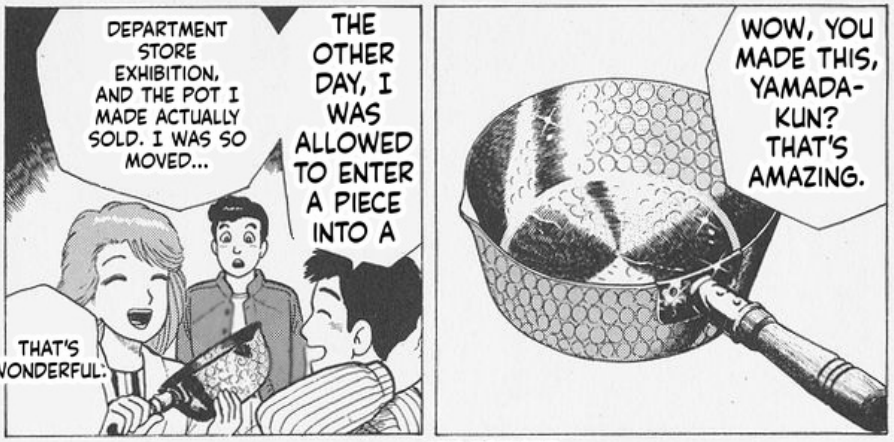
HAHAHA, YOU'RE EXAGGERATING.

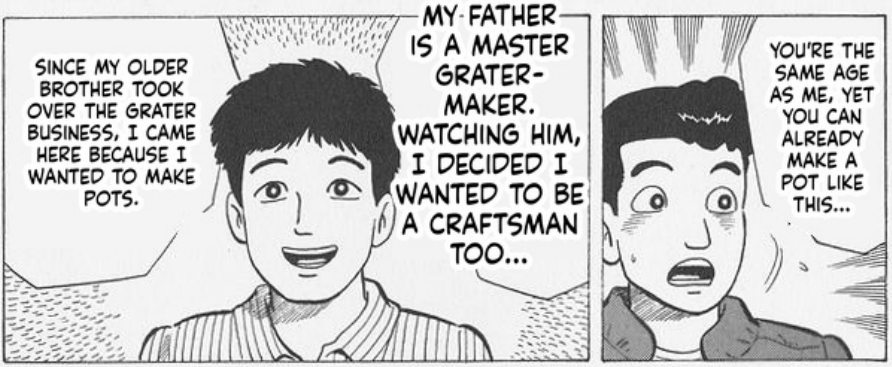
HE'S THE SAME AGE AS ME...

I'VE BEEN LEARNING HERE FOR THREE YEARS, SINCE I WAS SEVENTEEN.

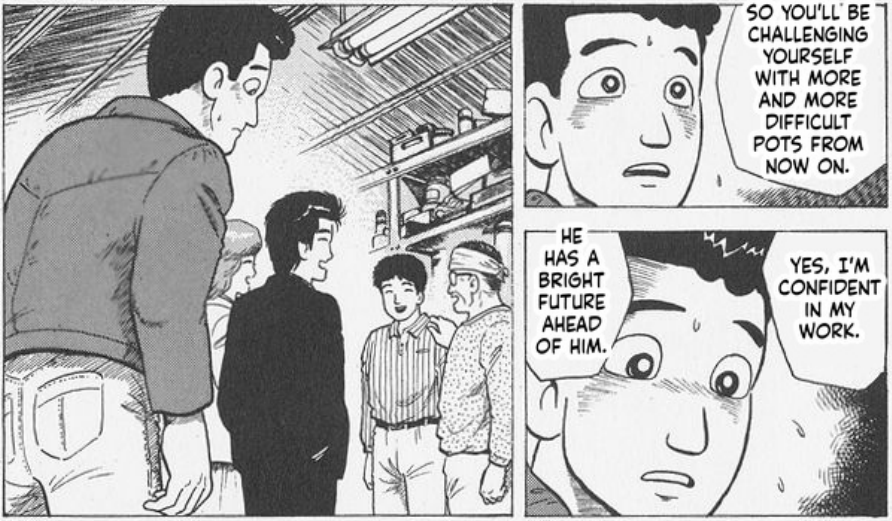
17
YAMADA-KUN, HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN AT IT?

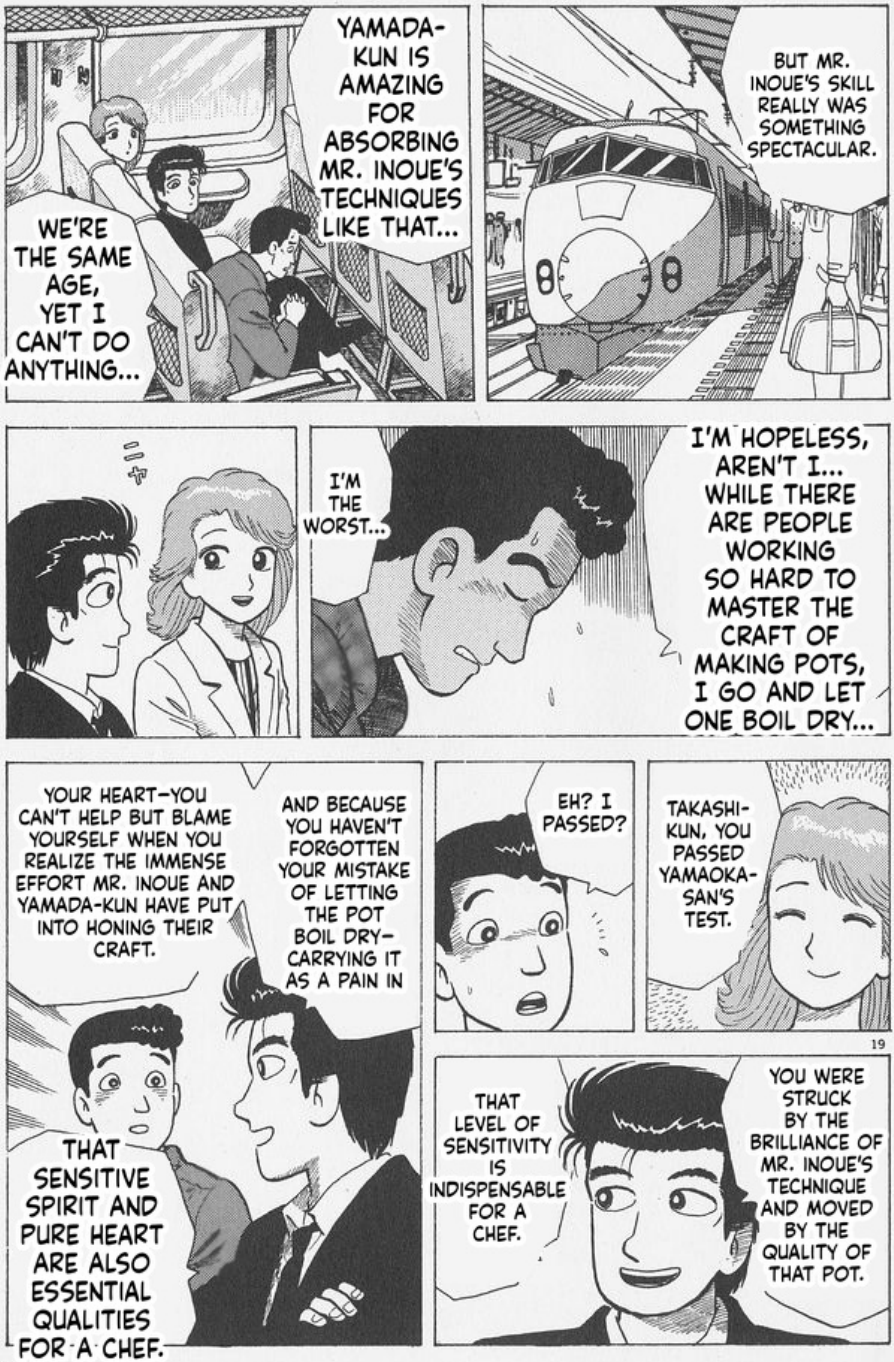

HERE, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS ONE.
CAN YOU ALREADY MAKE THEM THIS WELL?

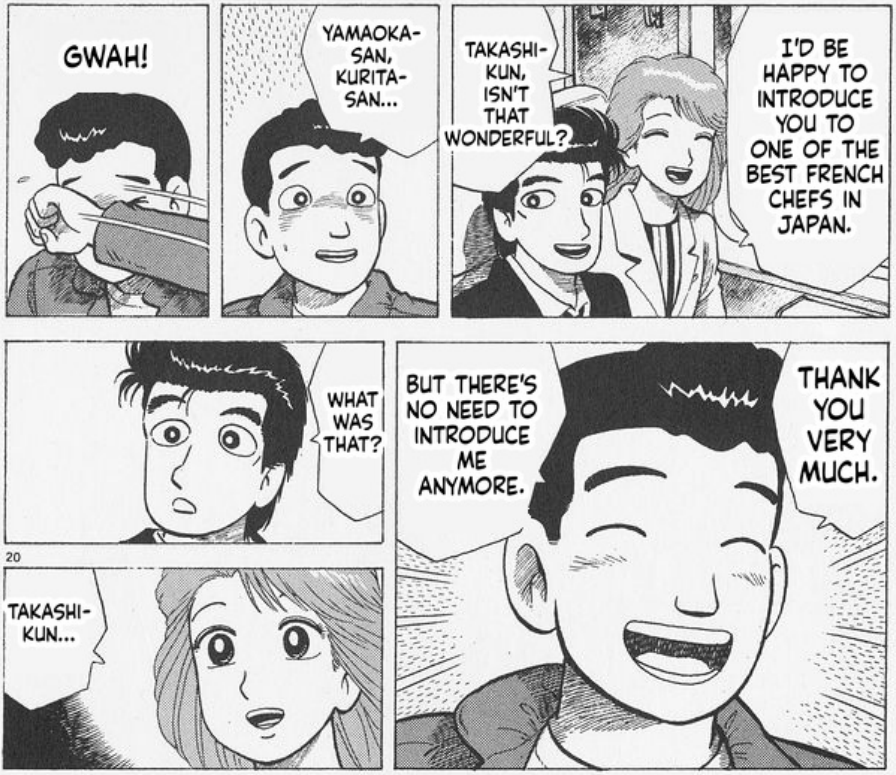

THE OTHER DAY, I WAS ALLOWED TO ENTER A PIECE INTO A DEPARTMENT STORE EXHIBITION, AND THE POT I MADE ACTUALLY SOLD. I WAS SO MOVED...
THAT'S WONDERFUL.
WOW, YOU MADE THIS, YAMADA-KUN? THAT'S AMAZING.

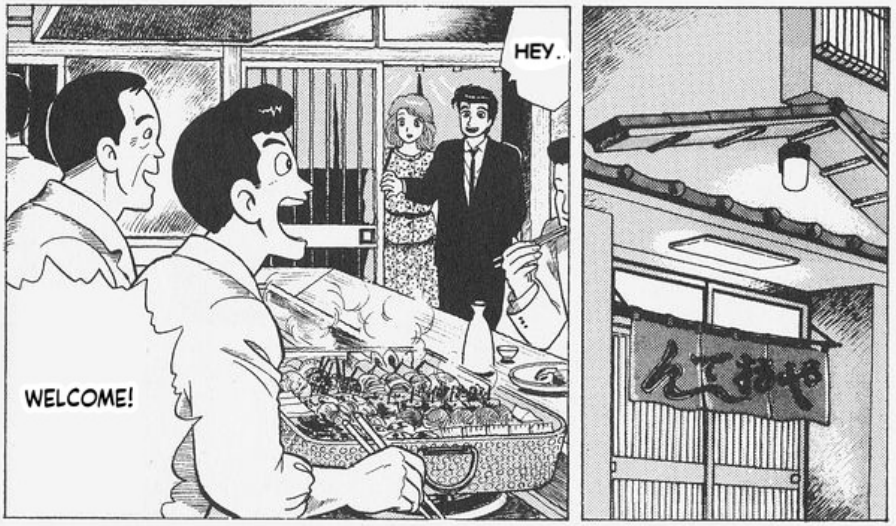

MY FATHER IS A MASTER GRATER-MAKER. WATCHING HIM, I DECIDED I WANTED TO BE A CRAFTSMAN TOO...
SINCE MY OLDER BROTHER TOOK OVER THE GRATER BUSINESS, I CAME HERE BECAUSE I WANTED TO MAKE POTS.
YOU'RE THE SAME AGE AS ME, YET YOU CAN ALREADY MAKE A POT LIKE THIS...

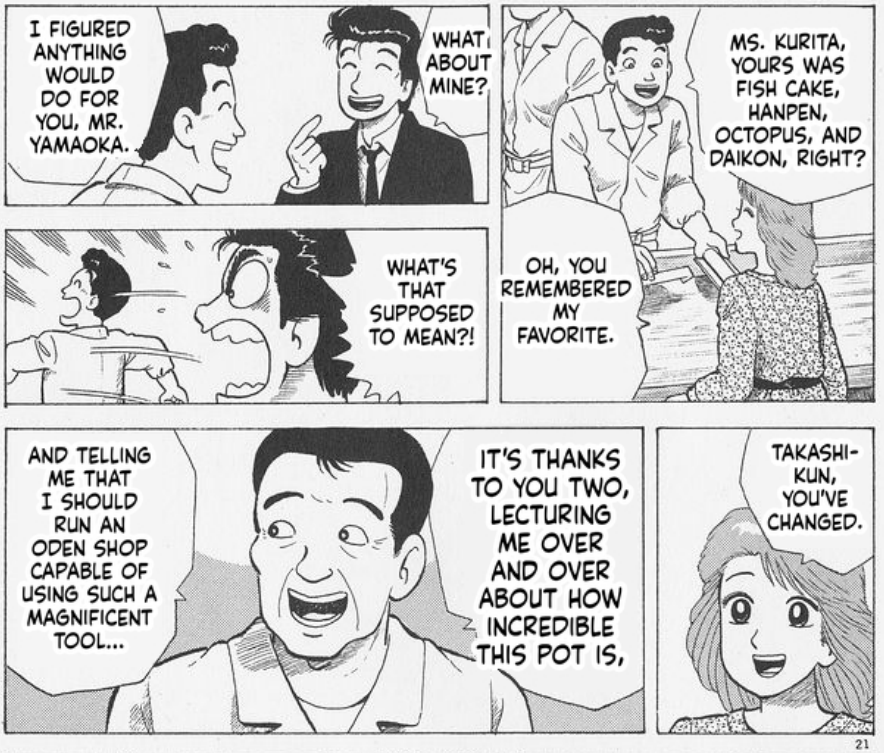
18


SO YOU'LL BE CHALLENGING YOURSELF WITH MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT POTS FROM NOW ON.
HE HAS A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD OF HIM.
YES, I'M CONFIDENT IN MY WORK.


YAMADA-KUN IS AMAZING FOR ABSORBING MR. INOUE'S TECHNIQUES LIKE THAT...
WE'RE THE SAME AGE, YET I CAN'T DO ANYTHING...
BUT MR. INOUE'S SKILL REALLY WAS SOMETHING SPECTACULAR.
I'M THE WORST...
I'M HOPELESS, AREN'T I... WHILE THERE ARE PEOPLE WORKING SO HARD TO MASTER THE CRAFT OF MAKING POTS, I GO AND LET ONE BOIL DRY...
YOUR HEART—YOU CAN'T HELP BUT BLAME YOURSELF WHEN YOU REALIZE THE IMMENSE EFFORT MR. INOUE AND YAMADA-KUN HAVE PUT INTO HONING THEIR CRAFT.
AND BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR MISTAKE OF LETTING THE POT BOIL DRY—CARRYING IT AS A PAIN IN
THAT SENSITIVE SPIRIT AND PURE HEART ARE ALSO ESSENTIAL QUALITIES FOR A CHEF.
EH? I PASSED?
TAKASHI-KUN, YOU PASSED YAMAOKA-SAN'S TEST.
19
THAT LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY IS INDISPENSABLE FOR A CHEF.
YOU WERE STRUCK BY THE BRILLIANCE OF MR. INOUE'S TECHNIQUE AND MOVED BY THE QUALITY OF THAT POT.


GWAH!
YAMAOKA-SAN, KURITA-SAN...
TAKASHI-KUN, ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?
I'D BE HAPPY TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ONE OF THE BEST FRENCH CHEFS IN JAPAN.
WHAT WAS THAT?
BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO INTRODUCE ME ANYMORE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
20
TAKASHI-KUN...


HEY.
WELCOME!
とんかつや



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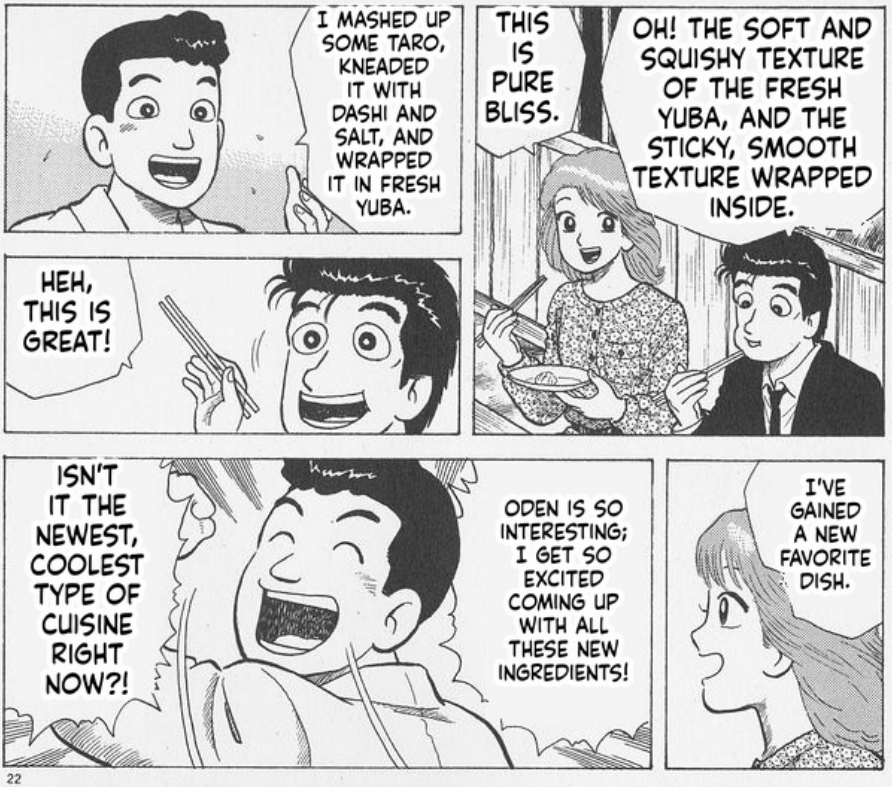
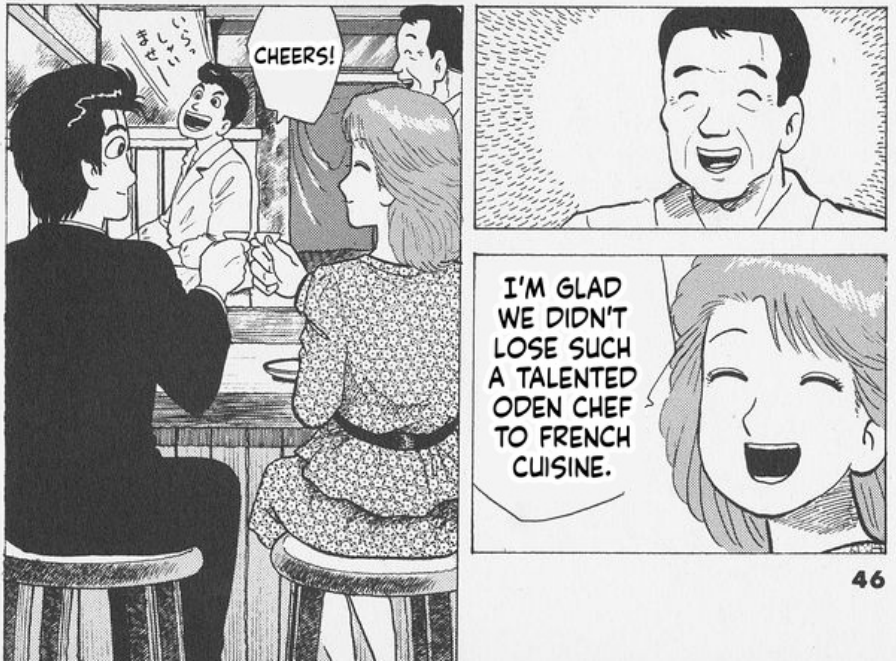
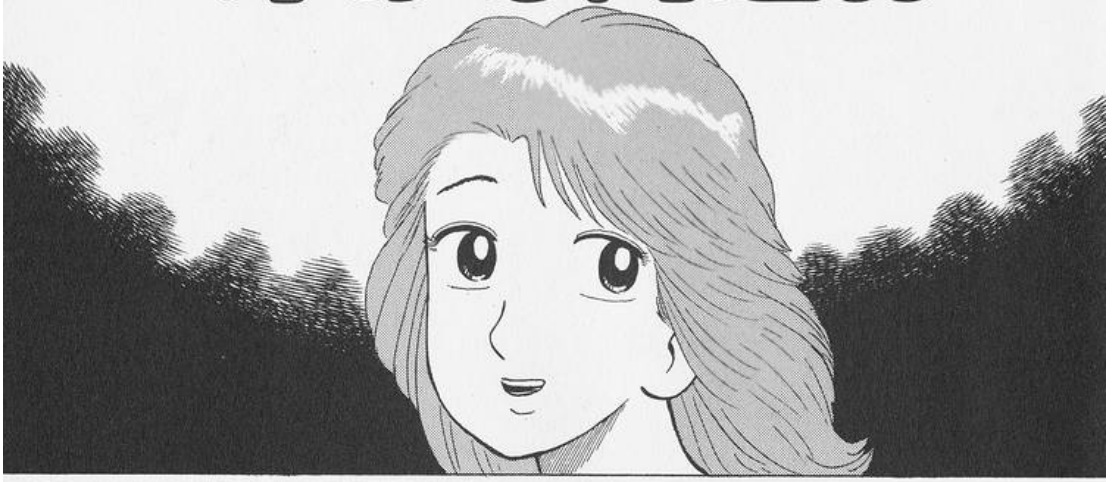
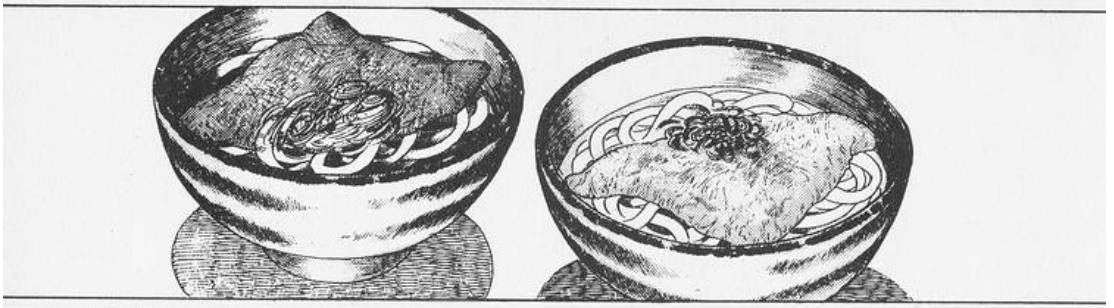

I MASHED UP SOME TARO, KNEADED IT WITH DASHI AND SALT, AND WRAPPED IT IN FRESH YUBA.
THIS IS PURE BLISS.
OH! THE SOFT AND SQUISHY TEXTURE OF THE FRESH YUBA, AND THE STICKY, SMOOTH TEXTURE WRAPPED INSIDE.
HEH, THIS IS GREAT!
ISN'T IT THE NEWEST, COOLEST TYPE OF CUISINE RIGHT NOW?!
ODEN IS SO INTERESTING; I GET SO EXCITED COMING UP WITH ALL THESE NEW INGREDIENTS!
I'VE GAINED A NEW FAVORITE DISH.

22

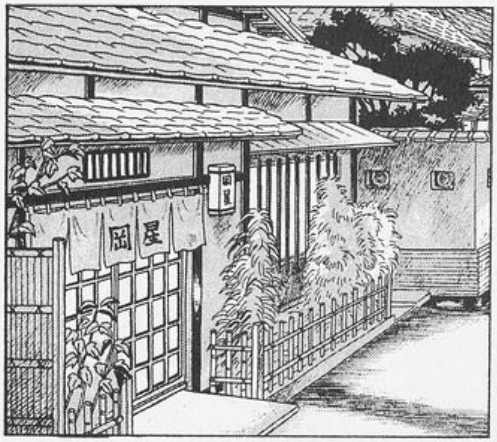

CHEERS!
I'M GLAD WE DIDN'T LOSE SUCH A TALENTED ODEN CHEF TO FRENCH CUISINE.

第3話 好みの問題!?





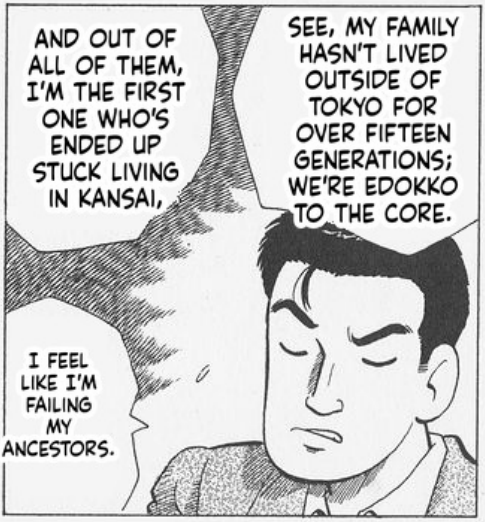
SORRY, SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
YO.
OH.
I'M STARVING TOO, SO LET'S GET GOING.
I'M SO HUNGRY.
THIS IS MY COLLEAGUE FROM THE SAME YEAR, SAKIKO MIZUMURA.
I'M KURITA.
2
HE'S UP FROM THE KANSAI BRANCH FOR A BUSINESS TRIP TO TOKYO, SO WE'RE HEADING OUT FOR SOME FOOD.
THIS IS KUNIO MOTOMURA, HE JOINED THE COMPANY AT THE SAME TIME AS ME.
I'M MIZUMURA.
I'M MOTOMURA.

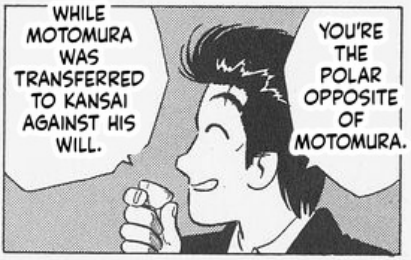


BY ANY CHANCE, ARE YOU GOING TO 'OKABOSHI', YAMAOKA-SAN?

YEAH. WOULD YOU TWO LIKE TO COME?

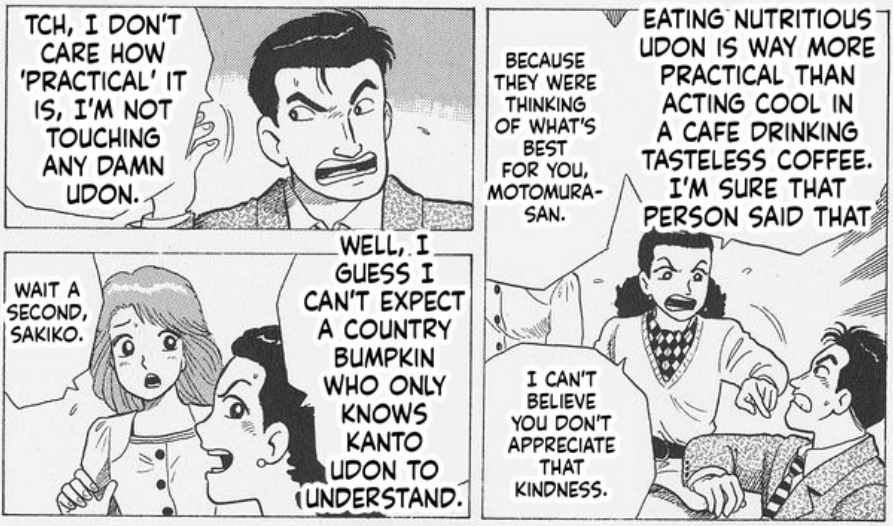
YES, I REQUESTED TO WORK AT THE KANSAI BRANCH, BUT THEY FORCED ME INTO THE TOKYO OFFICE...
HMM, SO MIZUMURA-SAN IS FROM KANSAI.

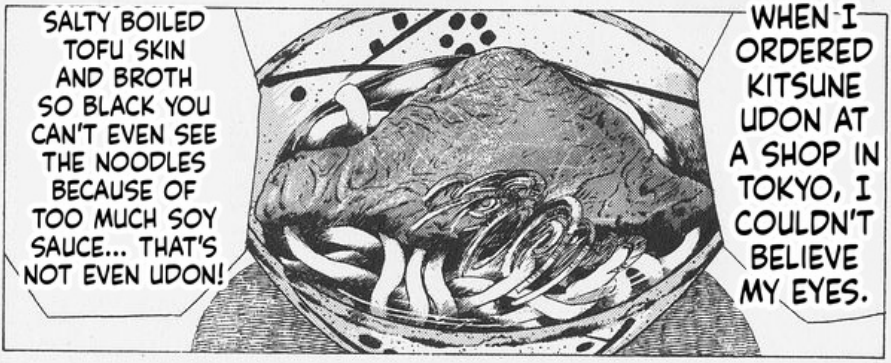

AND OUT OF ALL OF THEM, I'M THE FIRST ONE WHO'S ENDED UP STUCK LIVING IN KANSAI,
SEE, MY FAMILY HASN'T LIVED OUTSIDE OF TOKYO FOR OVER FIFTEEN GENERATIONS; WE'RE EDOKKO TO THE CORE.
I FEEL LIKE I'M FAILING MY ANCESTORS.

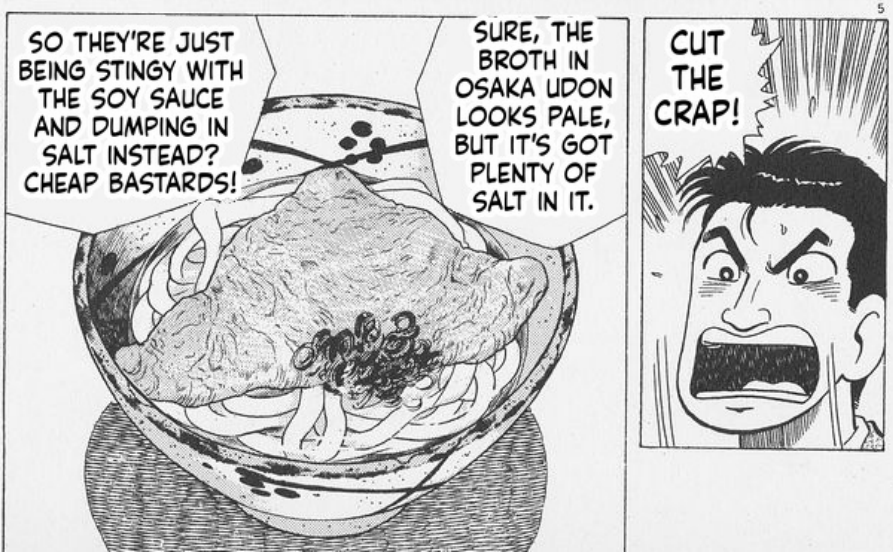

WHILE MOTOMURA WAS TRANSFERRED TO KANSAI AGAINST HIS WILL.
YOU'RE THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF MOTOMURA.

OH... MOTOMURA-SAN, DO YOU DISLIKE KANSAI?

GO EASY, YOU TWO.
IT'S A DISGRACE THAT I'M THE ONLY ONE LIVING HERE ON THE LAND OF THAT TRAITOR, TOKUGAWA IEYASU.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAY THAT, MY FAMILY HAS PRIDED ITSELF ON NEVER LEAVING OSAKA SINCE THE DAYS OF THE GREAT TAIKO,
THEN SHE GOES AND SAYS SHE'D RATHER HAVE UDON THAN TEA!
BUT I MET A CUTE GIRL, SO I INVITED HER OUT FOR SOME TEA.
BUT THEY SAY PEOPLE FROM OSAKA ARE GREAT BECAUSE THEY DON'T PUT ON AIRS.
THEY'VE GOT SO FEW AIRS IT'S A TOTAL BUZZKILL.
4
WHAT?!
FRIVOLOUS, INSENSITIVE... THEY'RE THE WORST.
THIS IS WHY I HATE TOKYO MEN.
I'M AN EDOKKO, BORN AND BRED! YOU THINK I'D DO SOMETHING AS PATHETIC AS TALKING ABOUT LOVE OVER A BOWL OF UDON?
WAHAHA!

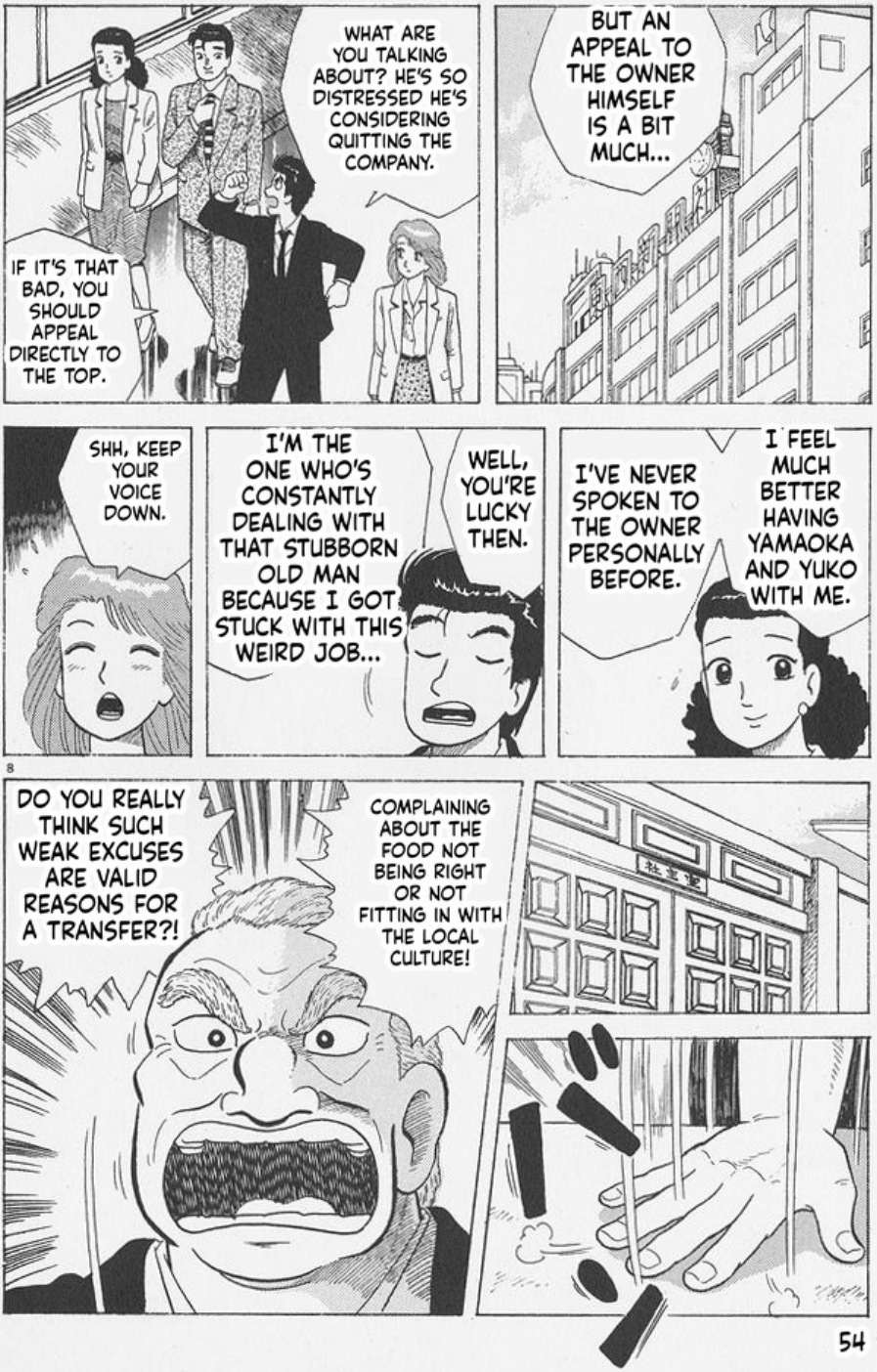

TCH, I DON'T CARE HOW 'PRACTICAL' IT IS, I'M NOT TOUCHING ANY DAMN UDON.
WAIT A SECOND, SAKIKO.
WELL, I GUESS I CAN'T EXPECT A COUNTRY BUMPKIN WHO ONLY KNOWS KANTO UDON TO UNDERSTAND.
BECAUSE THEY WERE THINKING OF WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU, MOTOMURA-SAN.
EATING NUTRITIOUS UDON IS WAY MORE PRACTICAL THAN ACTING COOL IN A CAFE DRINKING TASTELESS COFFEE. I'M SURE THAT PERSON SAID THAT
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DON'T APPRECIATE THAT KINDNESS.


SALTY BOILED TOFU SKIN AND BROTH SO BLACK YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE THE NOODLES BECAUSE OF TOO MUCH SOY SAUCE... THAT'S NOT EVEN UDON!
WHEN I ORDERED KITSUNE UDON AT A SHOP IN TOKYO, I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES.


SO THEY'RE JUST BEING STINGY WITH THE SOY SAUCE AND DUMPING IN SALT INSTEAD? CHEAP BASTARDS!
SURE, THE BROTH IN OSAKA UDON LOOKS PALE, BUT IT'S GOT PLENTY OF SALT IN IT.
CUT THE CRAP!

AT FIRST, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY A BOOK LIKE THAT WAS EVEN NECESSARY.
BUT COMING TO TOKYO HAS MADE ME REALIZE THE TRUTH.
HEY NOW, MOTOMURA...
THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS: WHY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT RESTAURANT GUIDEBOOKS FOR TOKYO?
んぐぐぐ...
OSAKA ISN'T LIKE THAT. EVERY SHOP IS DELICIOUS, SO THERE'S NO NEED FOR GUIDEBOOKS.
THE RESTAURANTS IN TOKYO ARE ALL TERRIBLE, SO YOU HAVE TO USE A GUIDEBOOK JUST TO FIND A DECENT PLACE.
BOY, THAT'S HARSH...
JUST LOOK, ALL THE TOP-TIER KAISEKI RESTAURANTS IN TOKYO ARE JUST BRANCHES OF KANSAI SHOPS.
PEOPLE IN TOKYO SIMPLY DON'T HAVE A CULTURE OF TASTE.
6
I STUDIED KYOTO CUISINE MYSELF.
EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING DASHI, THEY REALLY NEED TO LEARN THE KANSAI WAY...

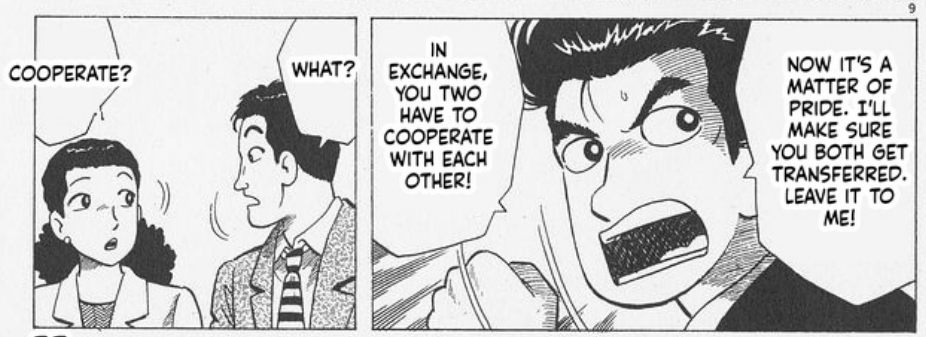
THIS IS WHAT I WANTED TO TALK TO YUKO ABOUT TODAY...
EVEN IN TOKYO, THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS MORE DELICIOUS THAN IN KANSAI!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP!!
SO I THOUGHT IF THEY WON'T TRANSFER ME TO THE TOKYO OFFICE, I'LL JUST QUIT.
YAMAOKA, I'M FED UP WITH OSAKA TOO. FIRST OF ALL, THAT DIM-WITTED TASTING FOOD...
SO IF THEY WON'T TRANSFER ME TO THE KANSAI OFFICE, I'M THINKING OF QUITTING...
I JUST CAN'T GET USED TO TOKYO NO MATTER WHAT. FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE FOOD...
.....
.....
WHAT?!
YOU'RE QUITTING THE COMPANY?!


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HE'S SO DISTRESSED HE'S CONSIDERING QUITTING THE COMPANY.
IF IT'S THAT BAD, YOU SHOULD APPEAL DIRECTLY TO THE TOP.
BUT AN APPEAL TO THE OWNER HIMSELF IS A BIT MUCH...
SHH, KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.
I'M THE ONE WHO'S CONSTANTLY DEALING WITH THAT STUBBORN OLD MAN BECAUSE I GOT STUCK WITH THIS WEIRD JOB...
WELL, YOU'RE LUCKY THEN.
I'VE NEVER SPOKEN TO THE OWNER PERSONALLY BEFORE.
I FEEL MUCH BETTER HAVING YAMAOKA AND YUKO WITH ME.
8
DO YOU REALLY THINK SUCH WEAK EXCUSES ARE VALID REASONS FOR A TRANSFER?!
COMPLAINING ABOUT THE FOOD NOT BEING RIGHT OR NOT FITTING IN WITH THE LOCAL CULTURE!

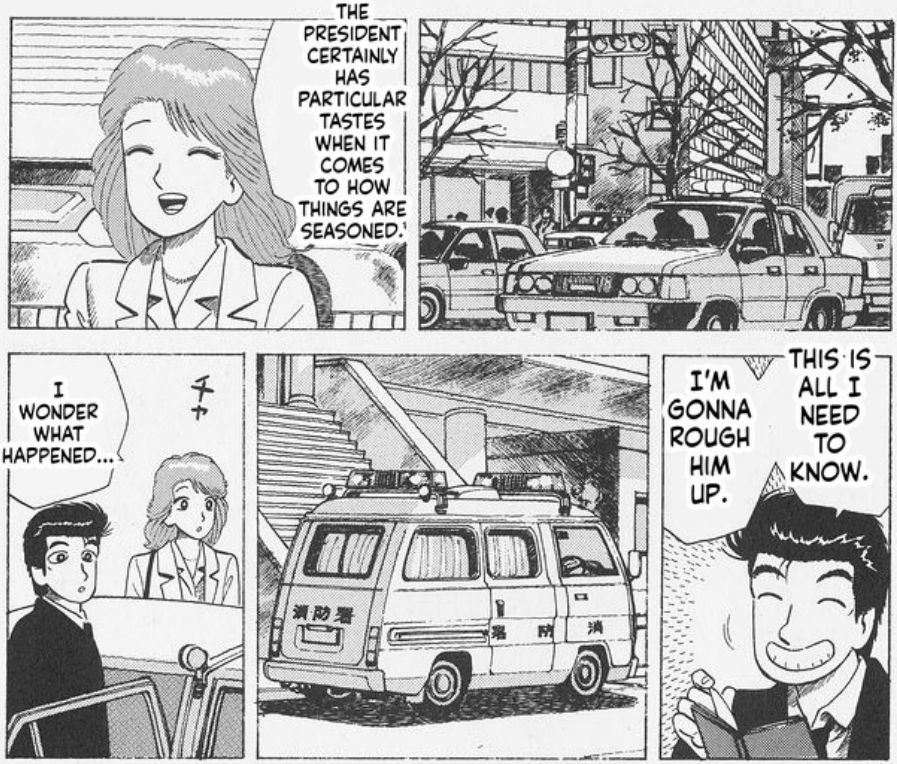
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
TO HEAR SUCH NONSENSE COMING FROM YOU IS TRULY DEPLORABLE!
UNLIKE YAMAOKA HERE, YOU TWO ARE THE FUTURE LEADERS OF THIS COMPANY.
SHUT UP! BOTH OF YOU, RECONSIDER!

THAT DIDN'T GO WELL...
ムス～～ッ
HE SHOT US DOWN WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT...

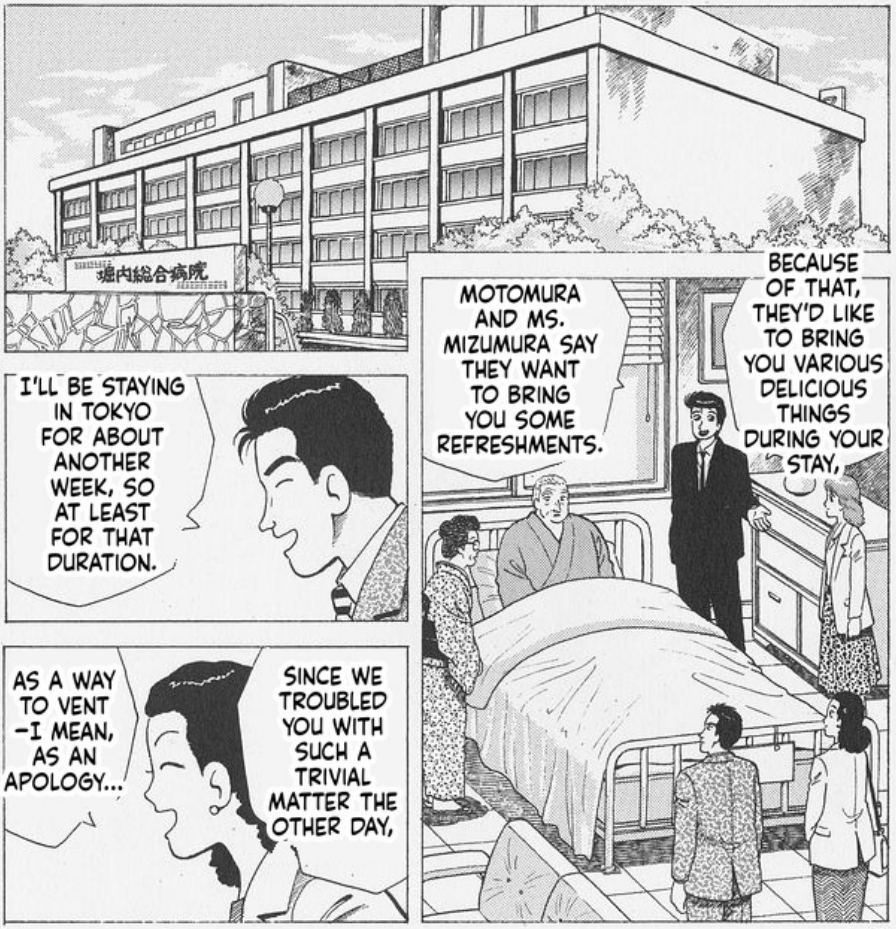
9

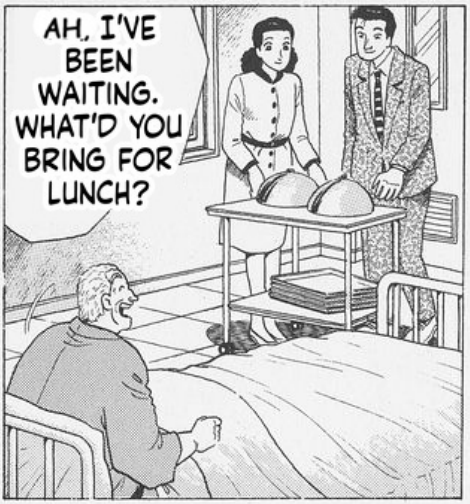

WHAT?
COOPERATE?
IN EXCHANGE, YOU TWO HAVE TO COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER!
NOW IT'S A MATTER OF PRIDE. I'LL MAKE SURE YOU BOTH GET TRANSFERRED. LEAVE IT TO ME!

OH MY, SO EVERYONE FROM THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT IS GOING TO TREAT MY HUSBAND TO A MEAL?
大乘
THAT MAN IS A BARBARIAN, SO HE'LL EAT JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.
AFTER ALL, YOU HELPED HIM OVERCOME HIS HATRED OF PORRIGE.
I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THE PRESIDENT DISLIKES.
YES, BUT IT WOULD BE RUDE IF I ACCIDENTALLY SERVED HIM SOMETHING HE HATES,
JACKPOT! I'VE GOT IT!
10
NO, NO, IT'S NOTHING.
EH? WHAT WAS THAT?
FOR EXAMPLE, PREFERRING KANSAI-STYLE UDON AND GETTING ANGRY IF IT'S SEASONED KANTO-STYLE.
BUT EVEN WITH THE SAME FOOD, THERE ARE THINGS PEOPLE DISLIKE IF THE SEASONING CHANGES.
OH, IF THAT'S THE CASE, THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS.

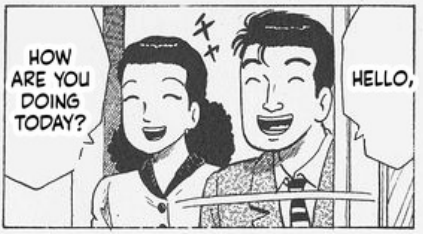

THE PRESIDENT CERTAINLY HAS PARTICULAR TASTES WHEN IT COMES TO HOW THINGS ARE SEASONED.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED...
チャ
消防署
THIS IS ALL I NEED TO KNOW.
I'M GONNA ROUGH HIM UP.
11
PRESIDENT!
WHAT?
HE JUST MISSED A STEP ON THE STAIRS AND HIT HIS HIP.
DON'T WORRY, IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS.

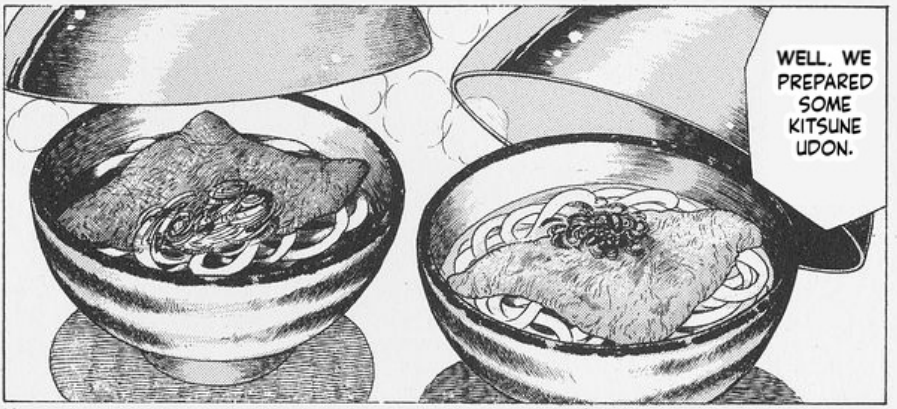
ピーポー ピーポー
消防署
PLEASE KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, IT ECHOES IN HERE...
OUCH...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'WHAT'!
AND WE PUT SO MUCH THOUGHT INTO IT, TOO...
GOOD GRIEF, OUR PLANS ARE RUINED.
APPARENTLY, HE'LL BE HOSPITALIZED FOR A WEEK...
会議室
WHY?
HUH?
YOU'LL SEE...
THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY!
NOT SO!


堀内総合病院
I'LL BE STAYING IN TOKYO FOR ABOUT ANOTHER WEEK, SO AT LEAST FOR THAT DURATION.
MOTOMURA AND MS. MIZUMURA SAY THEY WANT TO BRING YOU SOME REFRESHMENTS.
BECAUSE OF THAT, THEY'D LIKE TO BRING YOU VARIOUS DELICIOUS THINGS DURING YOUR STAY,
AS A WAY TO VENT —I MEAN, AS AN APOLOGY...
SINCE WE TROUBLED YOU WITH SUCH A TRIVIAL MATTER THE OTHER DAY,
13
ニヤ
ニタ
I'LL ACCEPT THAT SENTIMENT WITH GRATITUDE.
I SEE, WELL, THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU.


AH, I'VE BEEN WAITING. WHAT'D YOU BRING FOR LUNCH?

THE NEXT DAY, AT NOON
堀内総合病院


HELLO,
ヤァ
HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?


WELL, WE PREPARED SOME KITSUNE UDON.

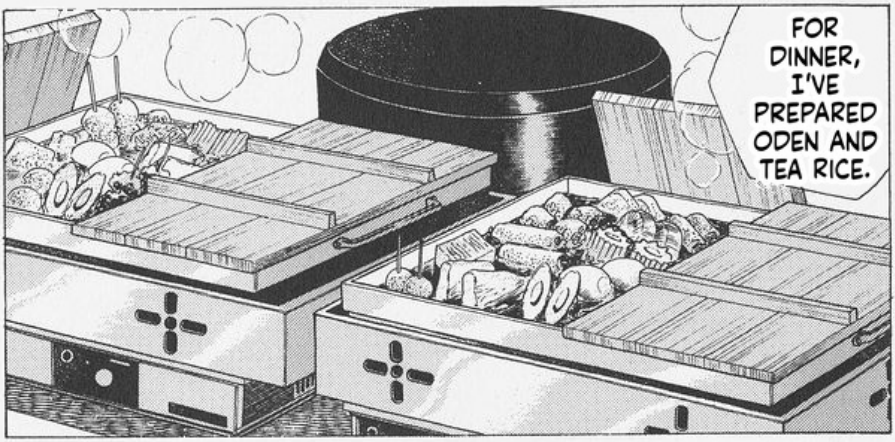
14

I-IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE MIZUMURA-KUN'S.
PLEASE, HELP YOURSELF.
ズィ
HERE YOU GO.
ズィ

HM? THEY'RE BOTH KITSUNE UDON...

BONITO AND KELP, SUCH A DEEP AND RICH FLAVOR...
ズー
YES, THIS IS A FINE BROTH.
THE TEXTURE IS SO SMOOTH...
OHO... THE NOODLES HAVE SUCH A NICE CHEW...
チュル チュル
ズズー
チュル
ズルー
THE OIL HAS BEEN REMOVED PERFECTLY... AND THE SWEETNESS IS SO REFINED...
ハフ ホフ
NO, THIS IS TRULY EXCELLENT...!
15
NOW, TRY THE KITSUNE UDON ON MY END...
スッ
EH?
AH, THAT WAS DELICIOUS. THANKS FOR THE MEAL.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THE NOODLES AREN'T BAD, BUT...
チル…
YOU'RE USING TOO MUCH SOY SAUCE... THIS REEKS OF IT...
THE BROTH IS SO DARK... IT'S PITCH BLACK...
ARE YOU NOT GOING TO EAT MY UDON?
ギク
EH, AH, NO, BUT...
WELL, THIS IS...
HMM... IT'S TOO SALTY, AND THE OIL HASN'T BEEN DRAINED PROPERLY...
16
YOU'LL EAT MIZUMURA-SAN'S, BUT YOU WON'T EAT MINE...!
LET'S EAT.
I'M EATING IT.

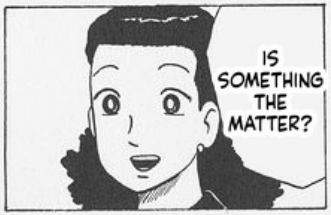

FOR DINNER, I'VE PREPARED ODEN AND TEA RICE.

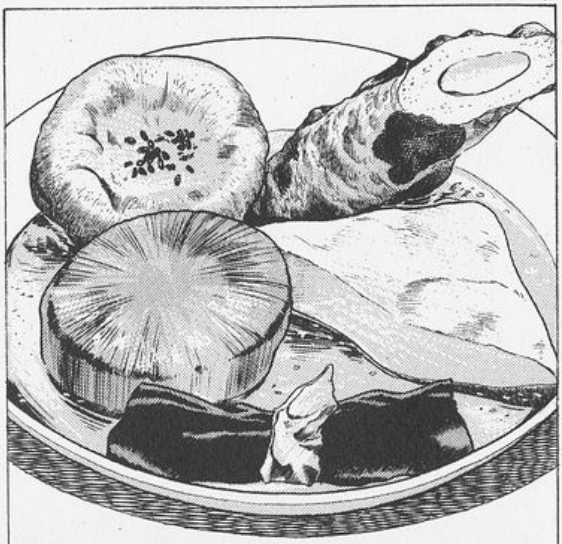
NOW, PLEASE, HELP YOURSELF.
OH, THIS AROMA IS IRRESISTIBLE.

YAY! I LOVE ODEN! THANK YOU SO MUCH.

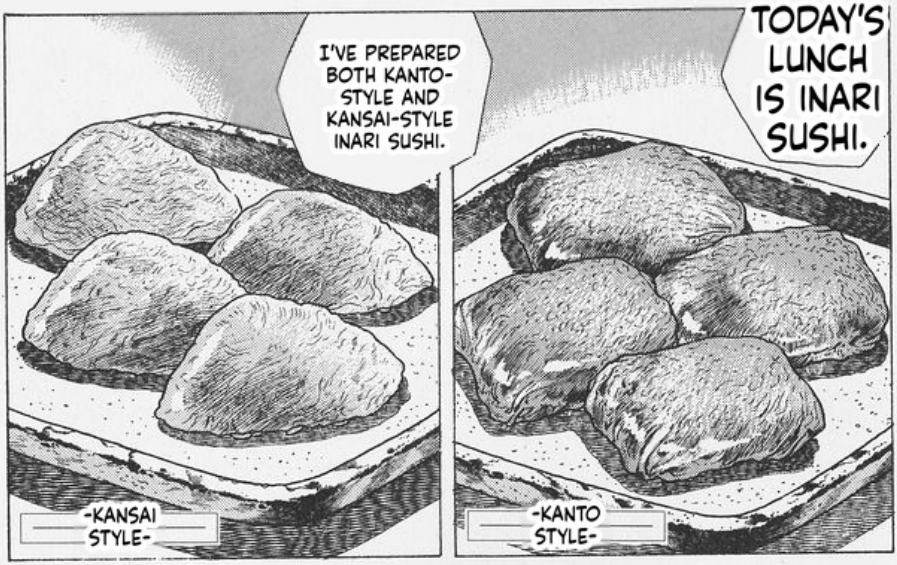
17

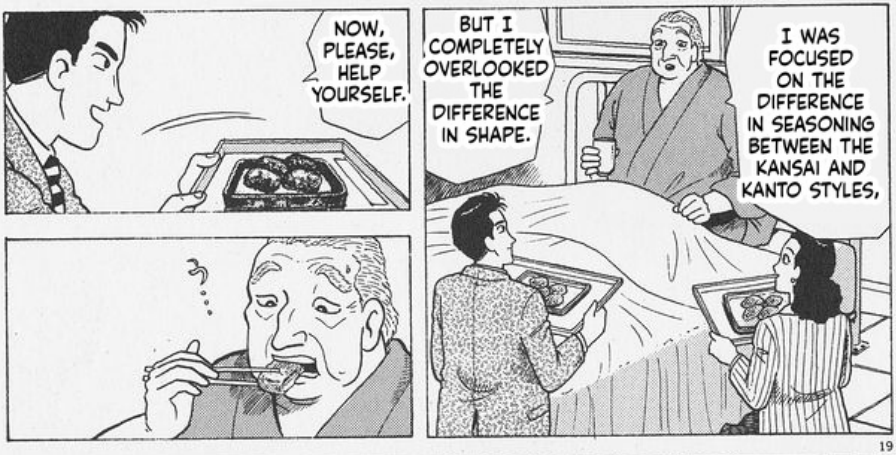
THIS IS... A KELP ROLL...


IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

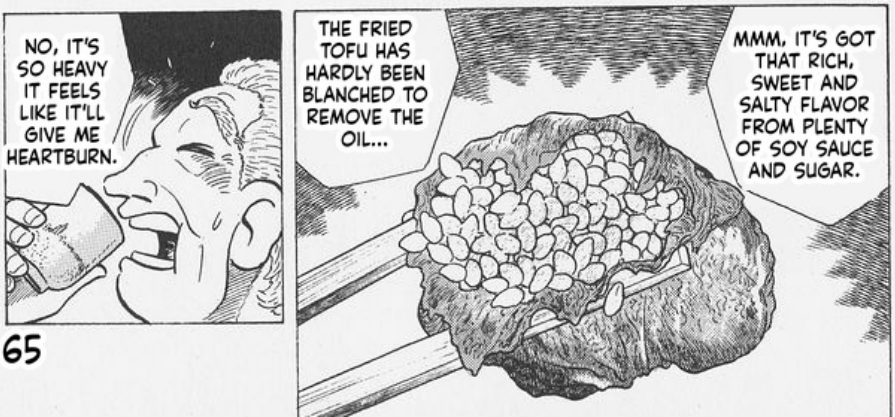


IN THE END, EVERYTHING STARTS SMELLING LIKE SEAWEED, AND IT JUST DOESN'T TASTE GOOD...
ODEN IS SIMMERED FOR A LONG TIME. WHEN YOU DO THAT, THE SEAWEED SMELL OF THE KOMBU COMES OUT AND SEEPS INTO ALL THE OTHER INGREDIENTS.
I'M JUST NOT A FAN OF PUTTING KOMBU IN ODEN.
NO, IT'S JUST...?
HUH?
BLESS YOU! THAT'S EXACTLY IT!
OH! THE WONDERFUL AROMA OF BONITO FLAKES!
I'M NOT FOND OF KOMBU IN ODEN EITHER, SO I DON'T EVEN USE IT TO MAKE THE BROTH.
PLEASE, TRY THIS.
LET'S EAT.
I-I'LL EAT IT.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO TRY MY ODEN?
ギクゥ
18


I'VE PREPARED BOTH KANTO-STYLE AND KANSAI-STYLE INARI SUSHI.
-KANSAI STYLE-
TODAY'S LUNCH IS INARI SUSHI.
-KANTO STYLE-


NOW, PLEASE, HELP YOURSELF.
...
BUT I COMPLETELY OVERLOOKED THE DIFFERENCE IN SHAPE.
I WAS FOCUSED ON THE DIFFERENCE IN SEASONING BETWEEN THE KANSAI AND KANTO STYLES,

19


NO, IT'S SO HEAVY IT FEELS LIKE IT'LL GIVE ME HEARTBURN.
THE FRIED TOFU HAS HARDLY BEEN BLANCHED TO REMOVE THE OIL...
MMM, IT'S GOT THAT RICH, SWEET AND SALTY FLAVOR FROM PLENTY OF SOY SAUCE AND SUGAR.

IT'S STUFFED WITH GOMOKU RICE CONTAINING CARROTS, DRIED GOURD SHAVINGS, AND SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS.
THE OIL HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY REMOVED, AND THE SOY SAUCE IS USED SPARINGLY.
NOW, TRY THIS...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THAT'S JUST RUSTIC, COUNTRY SEASONING!
REAL INARI-ZUSHI HAS TO HAVE THIS RICH, BOLD KANTO-STYLE FLAVOR!
THIS IS TRUE INARI-ZUSHI.
IT'S LIGHT AND REFRESHING, YET HAS SUCH A DEEP, SOULFUL FLAVOR...
20
I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE!
Y-YA... YAMAOKA, KURITA-KUN, GET OVER HERE!
PLEASE, TRY MINE!
NOW, PLEASE TRY MINE!
PRESIDENT!

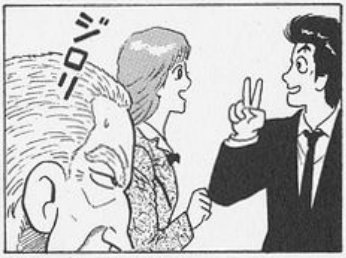
YOU BASTARDS!
I'VE KNOWN FOR A LONG TIME THAT YOU'RE THE ONES PULLING THE STRINGS BEHIND MOTOMURA AND MIZUMURA!

HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?
HEY.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO GRANT YOUR REQUESTS IN THE NEXT PERSONNEL RESHUFFLE.
IT'S TRUE THAT STRUGGLING TO ADAP TO THE FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT OF A FOREIGN LAND CAN BE PAINFUL.

THAT'S ABSURD!
YES!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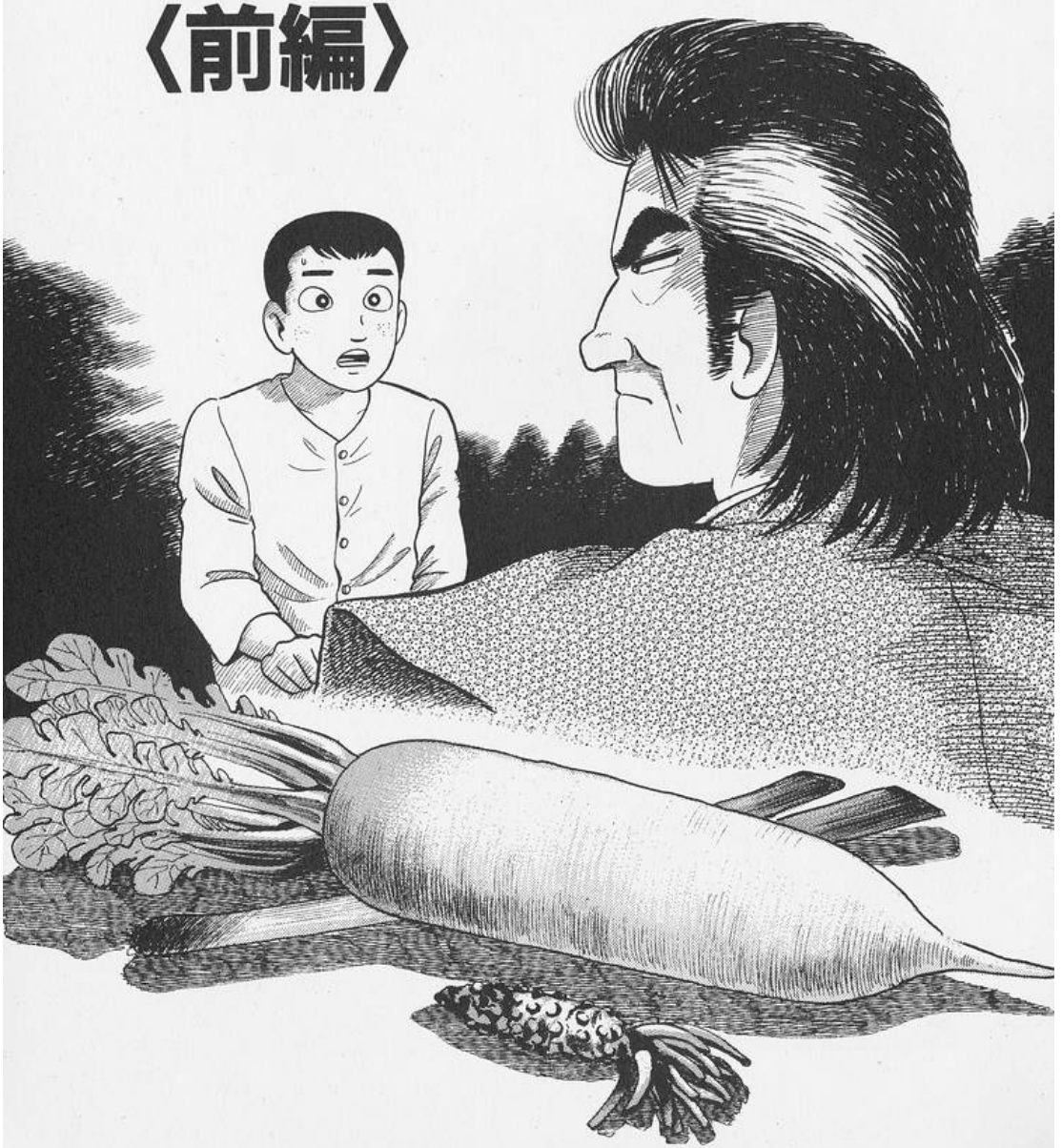
NOW, WHERE SHOULD I SEND THESE TWO?

IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU AND KURITA-SAN.
HEY THERE, MOTOMURA! I HEARD YOU'RE BACK AT THE MAIN OFFICE.
I'M INVITING YOU BOTH TO THE WEDDING, SO YOU'D BETTER COME!
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, WE BOTH...
BACK THEN, WE WORKED TOGETHER TO PERSUADE PRESIDENT OHARA, DIDN'T WE?
BUT SAKIKO...
I TURNED DOWN THE JOB OFFER IN OSAKA.
WHY?
22
HOW PATHETIC.
ふふふっ

第4話
薬味探訪
〈前編〉



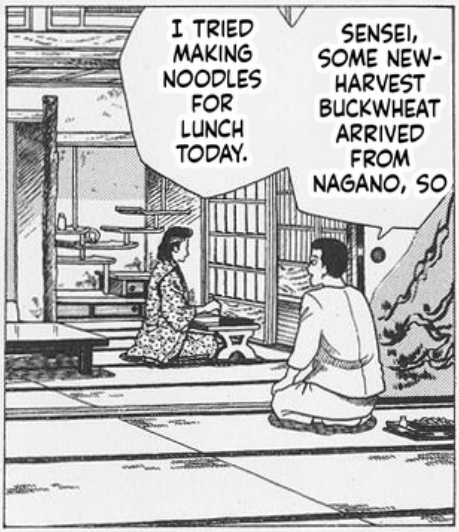
OH, SUZUKO-SAN, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
WE'RE ALL AWARE THAT RYOZO-SAN HAS FEELINGS FOR YOU WHILE HE'S IN TRAINING, SUZUKO-SAN, BUT WE'RE NOT SURE HOW YOU FEEL...
SUZUKO-SAN IS THE DAUGHTER OF AN INNKEEPER IN IZU, AND SHE WORKS AT KAIBARA YUZAN'S GOURMET CLUB.
THE TASK MASTER KAIBARA GAVE HIM IS SO DIFFICULT...
HE'S SUFFERING TERRIBLY.
I WANT YOU TO HELP RYOZO-SAN.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO RYOZO-SAN?
A TASK?

OISHINBO 32

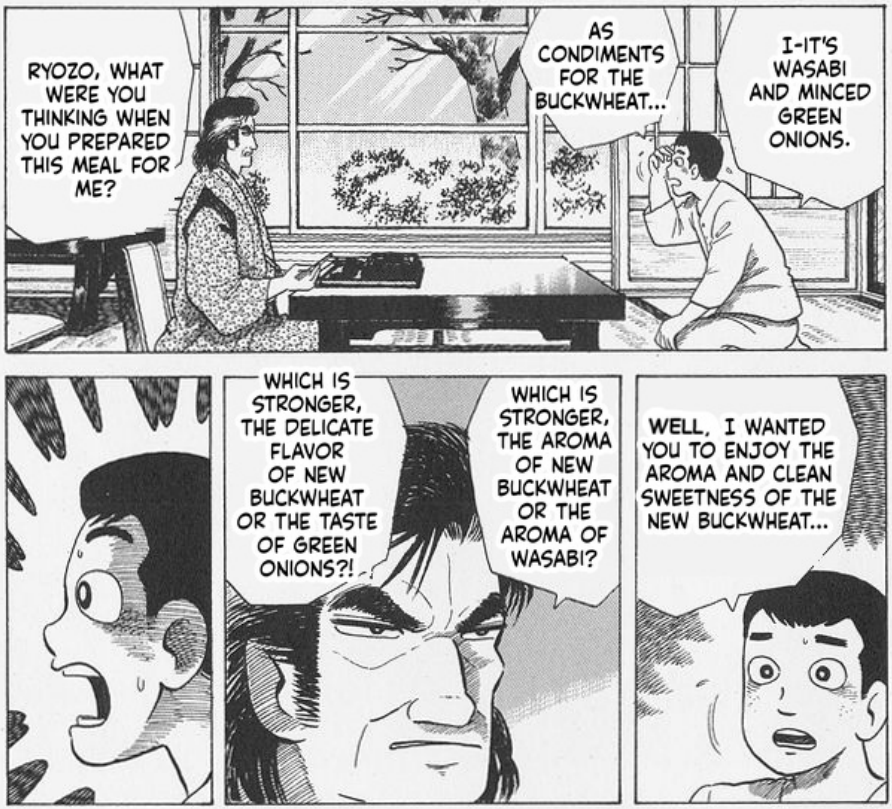
THE GOURMET CLUB

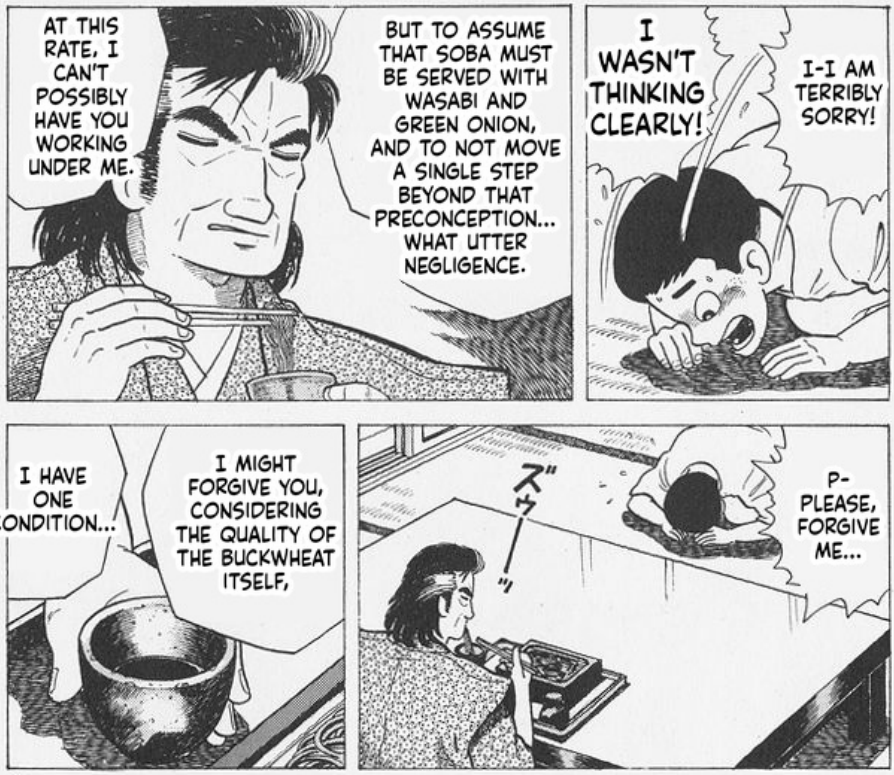
OH, FRESH BUCKWHEAT FROM NAGANO, IS IT?

HMM, IT HAS THE WONDERFUL AROMA OF FRESH BUCKWHEAT.

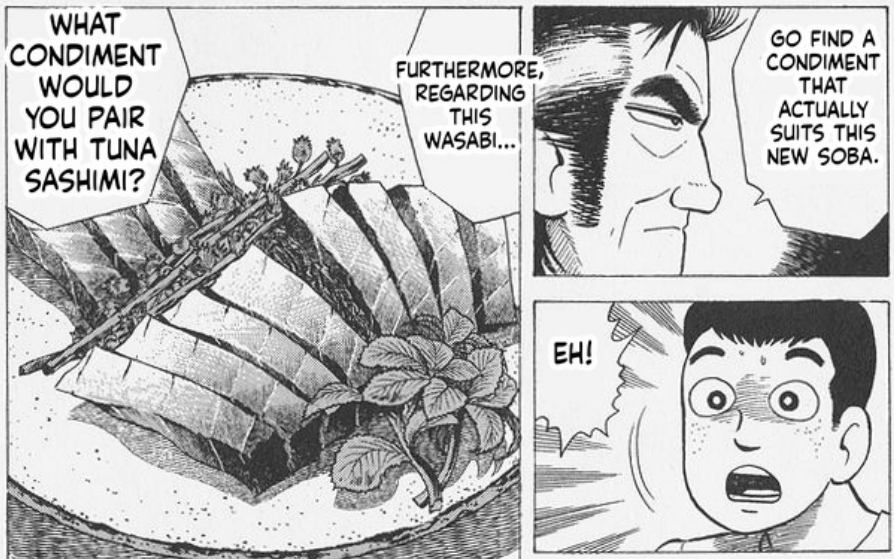

I TRIED MAKING NOODLES FOR LUNCH TODAY.
SENSEI, SOME NEW-HARVEST BUCKWHEAT ARRIVED FROM NAGANO, SO

カミ
AH!
ズウ
DID I... MAKE SOME KIND OF MISTAKE...?
MASTER.
4
WHAT IS THAT THING STUCK TO YOUR FACE!
YOU ABSOLUTE FOOL!
RYOZO, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT...?


RYOZO, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING WHEN YOU PREPARED THIS MEAL FOR ME?
AS CONDIMENTS FOR THE BUCKWHEAT...
I-IT'S WASABI AND MINCED GREEN ONIONS.
WHICH IS STRONGER, THE DELICATE FLAVOR OF NEW BUCKWHEAT OR THE TASTE OF GREEN ONIONS?!
WHICH IS STRONGER, THE AROMA OF NEW BUCKWHEAT OR THE AROMA OF WASABI?
WELL, I WANTED YOU TO ENJOY THE AROMA AND CLEAN SWEETNESS OF THE NEW BUCKWHEAT...
5
I CANNOT FORGIVE THE INSENSITIVITY OF ADDING THESE CONDIMENTS TO SUCH PRECIOUS NEW BUCKWHEAT.
IF IT WERE OLD BUCKWHEAT THAT HAD LOST ITS FLAVOR AFTER THE NEW YEAR, THAT WOULD BE ONE THING,
A... AH...
THE FRESH, LIGHT, AND REFINED FLAVOR IS RUINED BY THE SMELL AND TASTE OF WASABI AND ONIONS.
ORIGINALLY, CONDIMENTS WERE UNNECESSARY FOR EATING BUCKWHEAT, ESPECIALLY FOR FRESHLY HARVESTED NEW BUCKWHEAT.


AT THIS RATE, I CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE YOU WORKING UNDER ME.
BUT TO ASSUME THAT SOBA MUST BE SERVED WITH WASABI AND GREEN ONION, AND TO NOT MOVE A SINGLE STEP BEYOND THAT PRECONCEPTION... WHAT UTTER NEGLIGENCE.
I WASN'T THINKING CLEARLY!
I-I AM TERRIBLY SORRY!
I HAVE ONE CONDITION...
I MIGHT FORGIVE YOU, CONSIDERING THE QUALITY OF THE BUCKWHEAT ITSELF,
ズッ
P-PLEASE, FORGIVE ME...

6


WHAT CONDIMENT WOULD YOU PAIR WITH TUNA SASHIMI?
FURTHERMORE, REGARDING THIS WASABI...
GO FIND A CONDIMENT THAT ACTUALLY SUITS THIS NEW SOBA.
EH!

ARE YOU AN ABSOLUTE MORON?!
ひいい
I THOUGHT WASABI WAS THE ONLY WAY...
WHEN YOU SAY CONDIMENTS FOR TUNA SASHIMI...
UH... N- NO...
HAVE YOU TRIED ANY OTHER CONDIMENTS?
YOU AREN'T TASTING IT FOR YOURSELF; YOU'RE JUST FOLLOWING SOMEONE ELSE'S PALATE!
WHAT DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN TONGUE AND NOSE FOR?!
DO YOU EAT TUNA WITH WASABI OUT OF SHEER HABIT WITHOUT EVER QUESTIONING IT?!
7
RYOZO, GO FIND A CONDIMENT OTHER THAN WASABI THAT PAIRS WITH TUNA.
!
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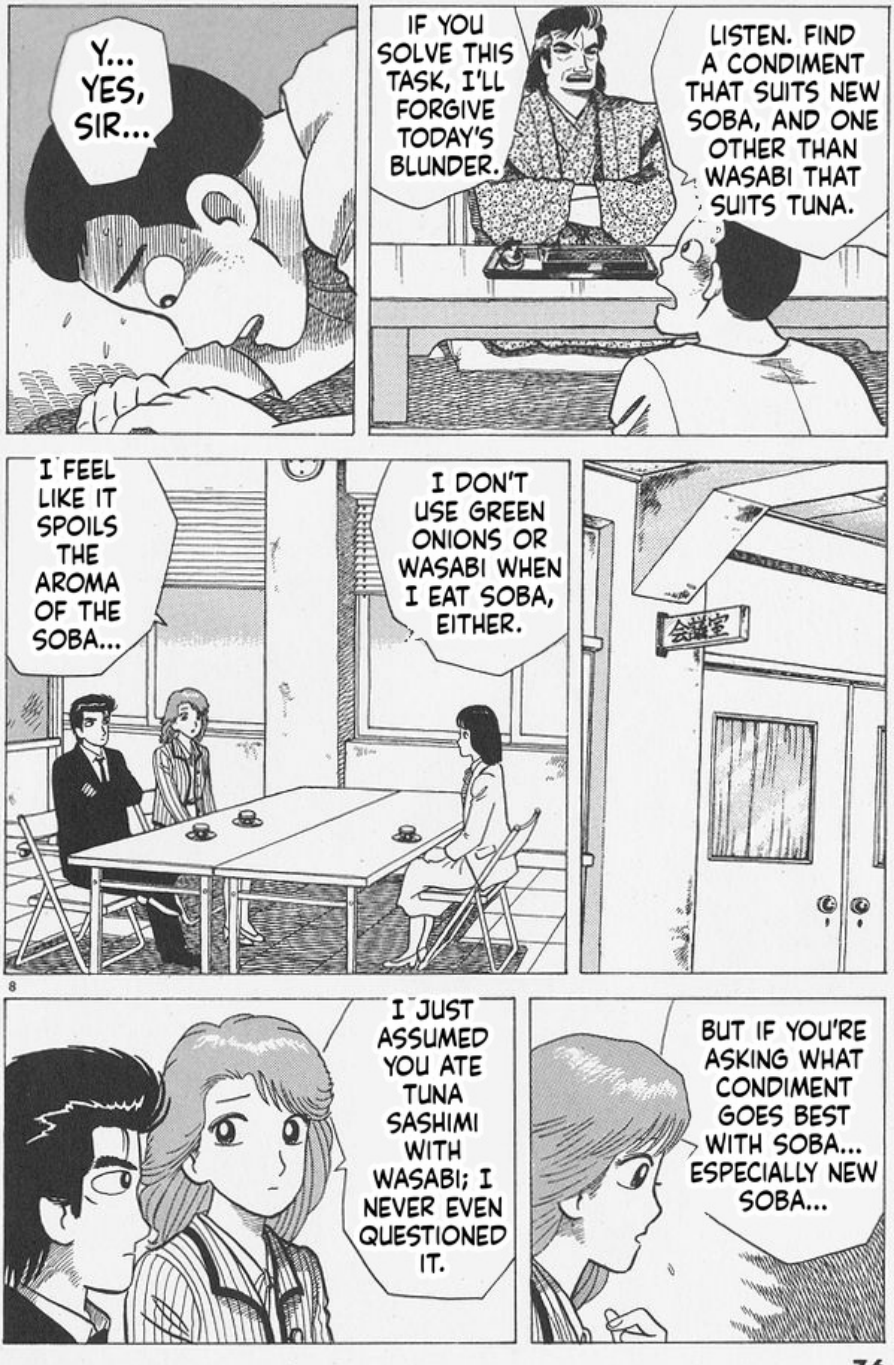
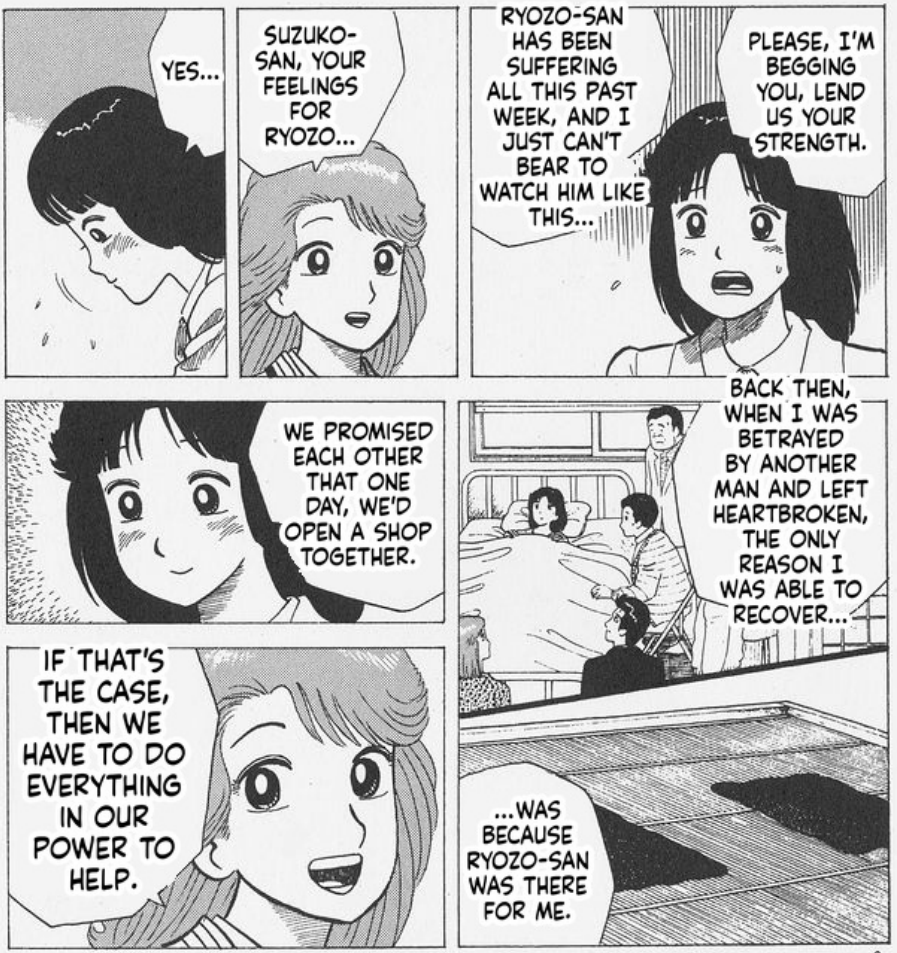
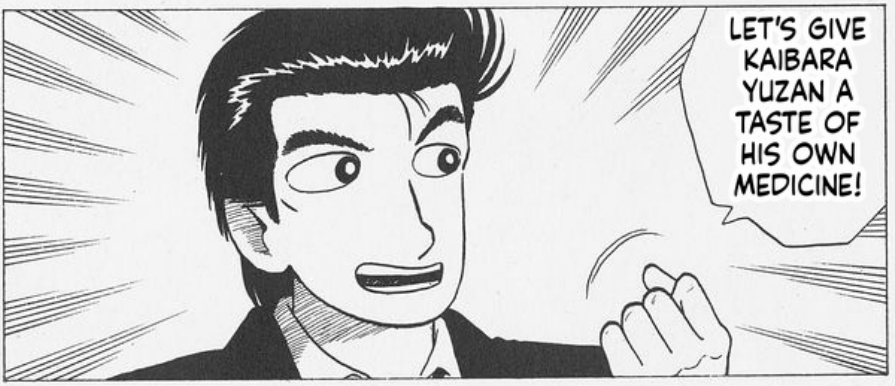
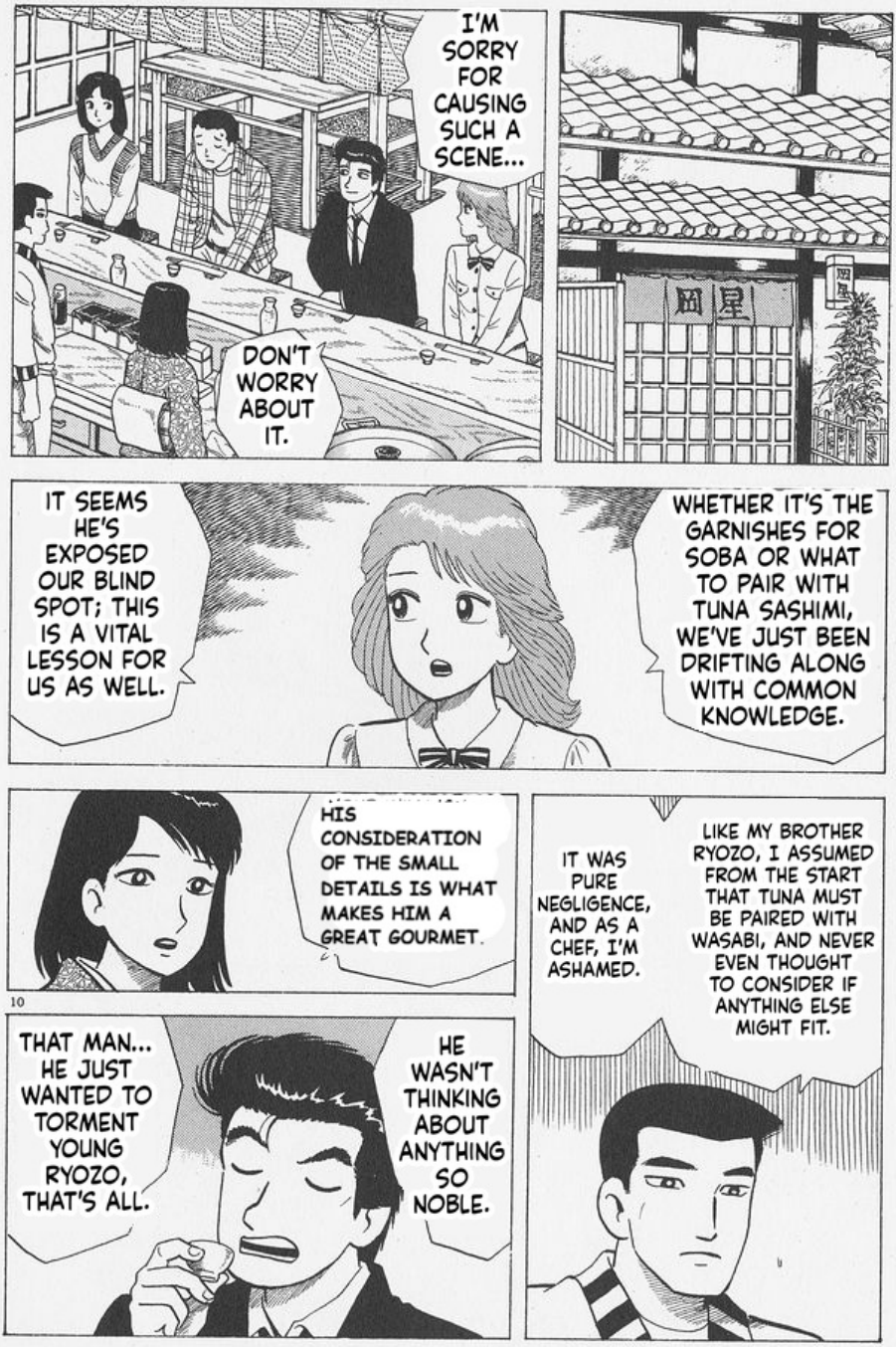
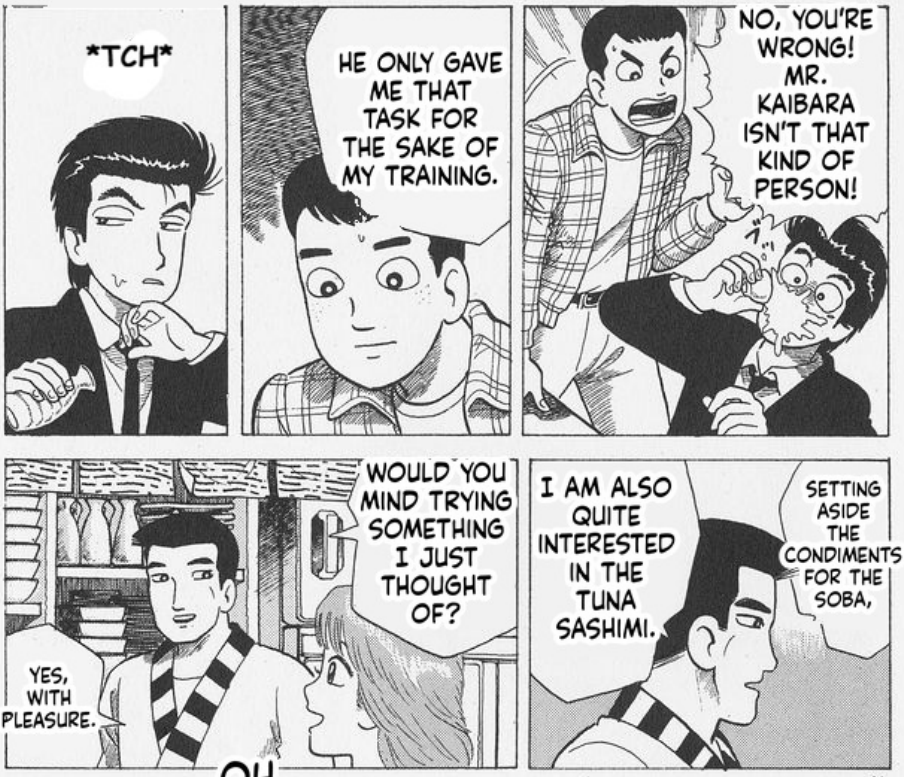
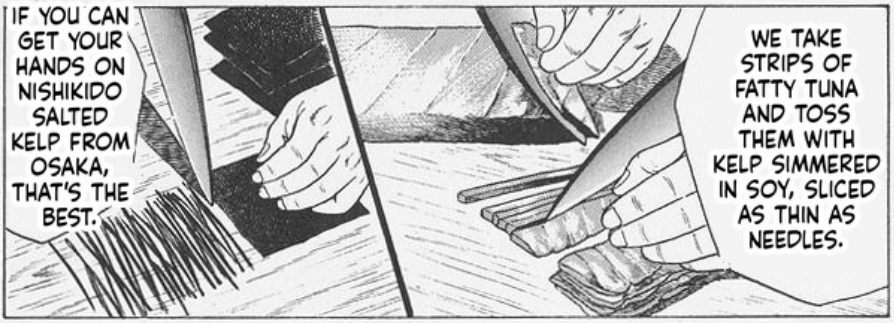

Y... YES, SIR...
IF YOU SOLVE THIS TASK, I'LL FORGIVE TODAY'S BLUNDER.
LISTEN. FIND A CONDIMENT THAT SUITS NEW SOBA, AND ONE OTHER THAN WASABI THAT SUITS TUNA.
I FEEL LIKE IT SPOILS THE AROMA OF THE SOBA...
I DON'T USE GREEN ONIONS OR WASABI WHEN I EAT SOBA, EITHER.
会議室
8
I JUST ASSUMED YOU ATE TUNA SASHIMI WITH WASABI; I NEVER EVEN QUESTIONED IT.
BUT IF YOU'RE ASKING WHAT CONDIMENT GOES BEST WITH SOBA... ESPECIALLY NEW SOBA...

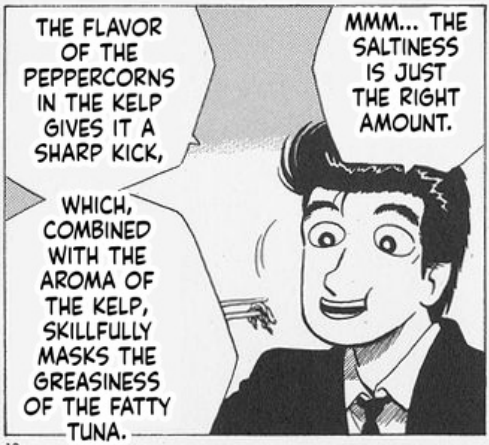

YES...
SUZUKO-SAN, YOUR FEELINGS FOR RYOZO...
RYOZO-SAN HAS BEEN SUFFERING ALL THIS PAST WEEK, AND I JUST CAN'T BEAR TO WATCH HIM LIKE THIS...
PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU, LEND US YOUR STRENGTH.
WE PROMISED EACH OTHER THAT ONE DAY, WE'D OPEN A SHOP TOGETHER.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WE HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO HELP.
BACK THEN, WHEN I WAS BETRAYED BY ANOTHER MAN AND LEFT HEARTBROKEN, THE ONLY REASON I WAS ABLE TO RECOVER...
...WAS BECAUSE RYOZO-SAN WAS THERE FOR ME.
9


LET'S GIVE KAIBARA YUZAN A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE!


I'M SORRY FOR CAUSING SUCH A SCENE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
岡星
IT SEEMS HE'S EXPOSED OUR BLIND SPOT; THIS IS A VITAL LESSON FOR US AS WELL.
WHETHER IT'S THE GARNISHES FOR SOBA OR WHAT TO PAIR WITH TUNA SASHIMI, WE'VE JUST BEEN DRIFTING ALONG WITH COMMON KNOWLEDGE.
HIS CONSIDERATION OF THE SMALL DETAILS IS WHAT MAKES HIM A GREAT GOURMET.
10
IT WAS PURE NEGLIGENCE, AND AS A CHEF, I'M ASHAMED.
LIKE MY BROTHER RYOZO, I ASSUMED FROM THE START THAT TUNA MUST BE PAIRED WITH WASABI, AND NEVER EVEN THOUGHT TO CONSIDER IF ANYTHING ELSE MIGHT FIT.
THAT MAN... HE JUST WANTED TO TORMENT YOUNG RYOZO, THAT'S ALL.
HE WASN'T THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING SO NOBLE.

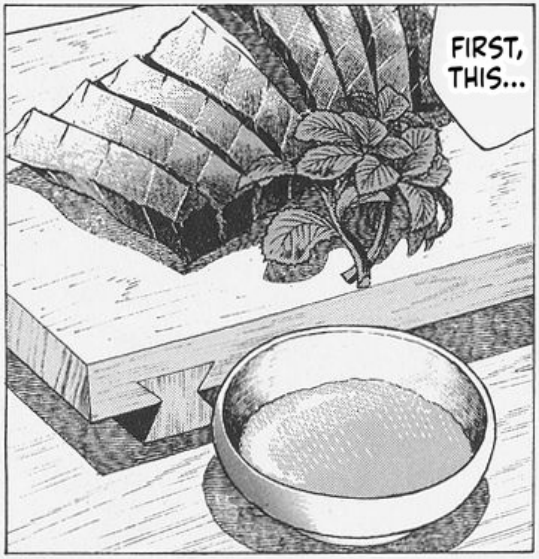

TCH
HE ONLY GAVE ME THAT TASK FOR THE SAKE OF MY TRAINING.
NO, YOU'RE WRONG! MR. KAIBARA ISN'T THAT KIND OF PERSON!
WOULD YOU MIND TRYING SOMETHING I JUST THOUGHT OF?
YES, WITH PLEASURE.
I AM ALSO QUITE INTERESTED IN THE TUNA SASHIMI.
SETTING ASIDE THE CONDIMENTS FOR THE SOBA,
11
OH... COULD THIS BE KELP?

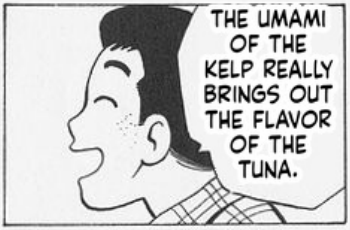

IF YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON NISHIKIDO SALTED KELP FROM OSAKA, THAT'S THE BEST.
WE TAKE STRIPS OF FATTY TUNA AND TOSS THEM WITH KELP SIMMERED IN SOY, SLICED AS THIN AS NEEDLES.


THE FLAVOR OF THE PEPPERCORNS IN THE KELP GIVES IT A SHARP KICK,
MMM... THE SALTINESS IS JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT.
WHICH, COMBINED WITH THE AROMA OF THE KELP, SKILLFULLY MASKS THE GREASINESS OF THE FATTY TUNA.

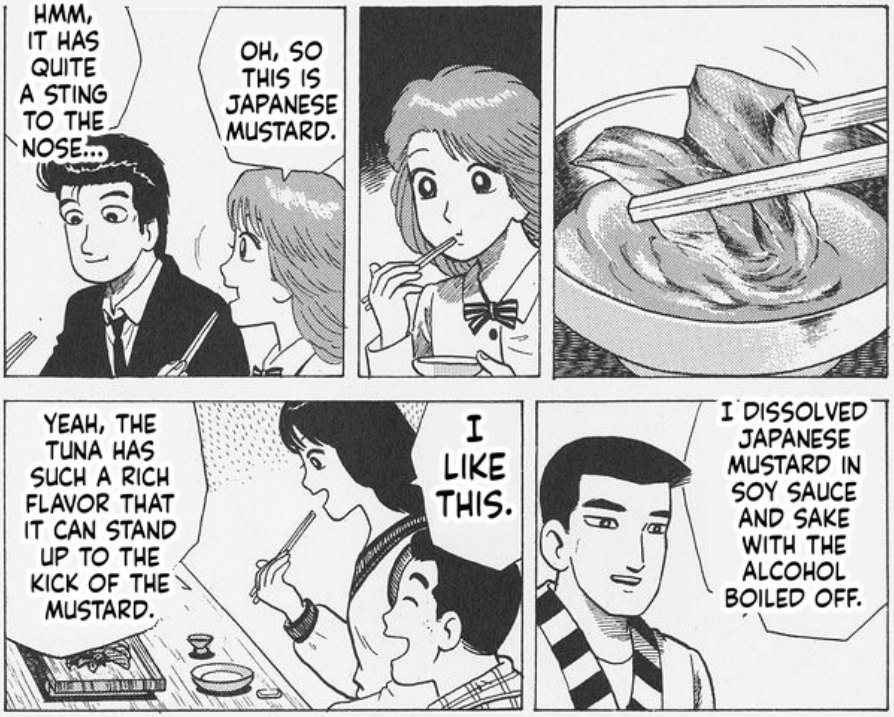
MY, THE FLAVOR IS MUCH MORE NATURAL THAN I EXPECTED.

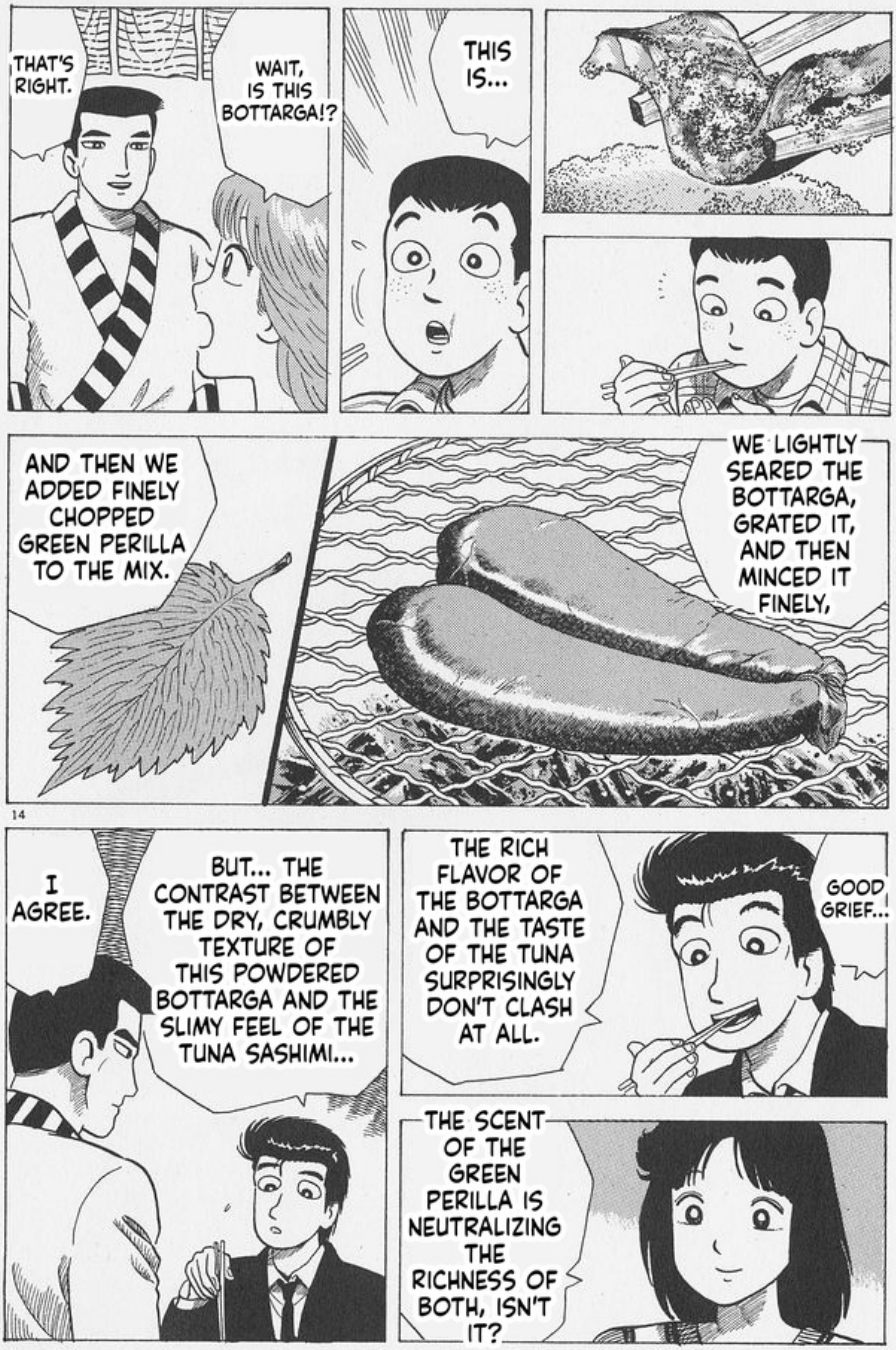
12


FIRST, THIS...


THE UMAMI OF THE KELP REALLY BRINGS OUT THE FLAVOR OF THE TUNA.

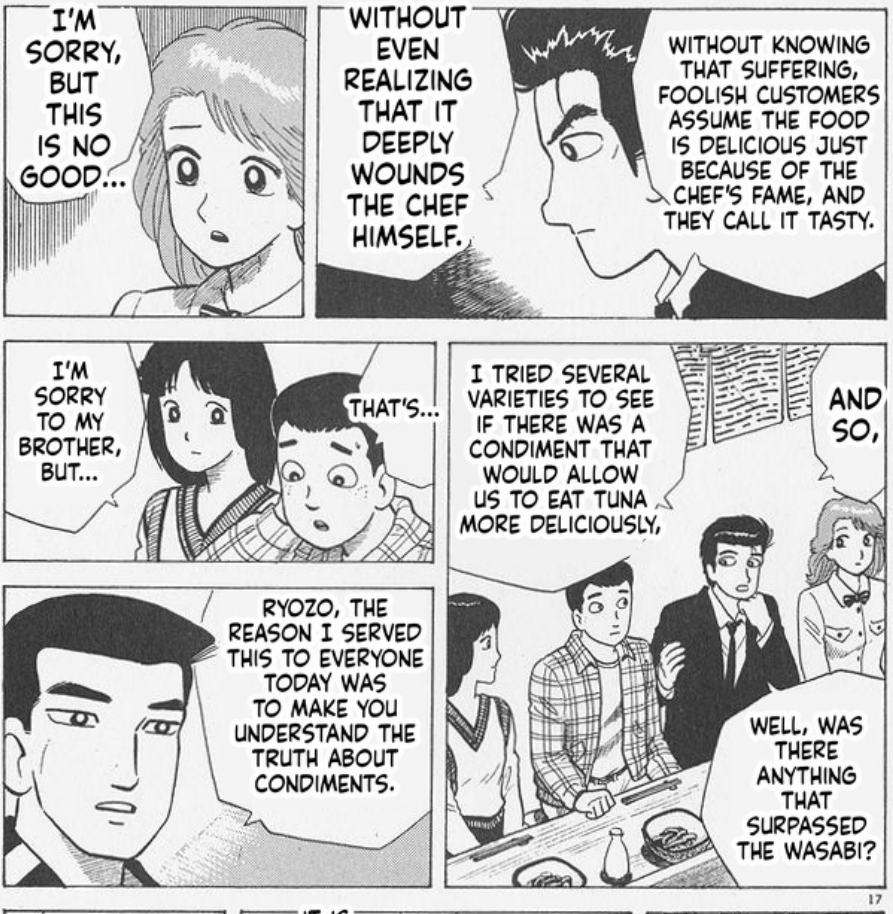
NEXT, I'D LIKE YOU TO TRY TUNA SASHIMI WITH A VARIETY OF SEASONINGS.

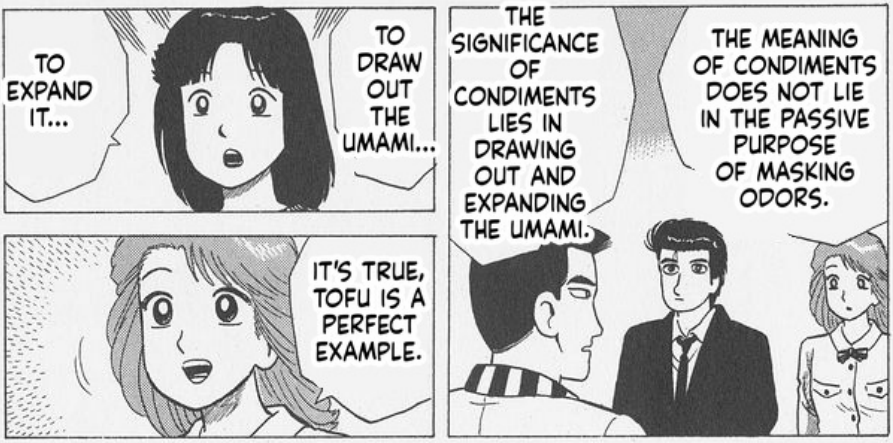

HMM, IT HAS QUITE A STING TO THE NOSE...
OH, SO THIS IS JAPANESE MUSTARD.
YEAH, THE TUNA HAS SUCH A RICH FLAVOR THAT IT CAN STAND UP TO THE KICK OF THE MUSTARD.
I LIKE THIS.
I DISSOLVED JAPANESE MUSTARD IN SOY SAUCE AND SAKE WITH THE ALCOHOL BOILED OFF.
AND INSIDE, THERE ARE FINELY CHOPPED GREEN BITS...
FINE YELLOW GRAINS...
COAT IT GENEROUSLY BEFORE YOU EAT IT.
13
THIS IS... SOME KIND OF POWDER!
EH!

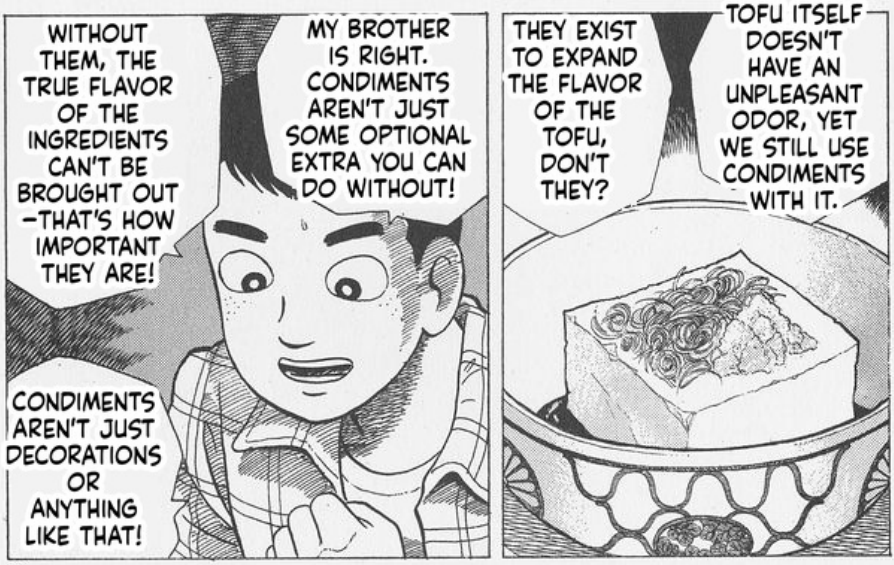

THAT'S RIGHT.
WAIT, IS THIS BOTTARGA!?
THIS IS...
AND THEN WE ADDED FINELY CHOPPED GREEN PERILLA TO THE MIX.
WE LIGHTLY SEARED THE BOTTARGA, GRATED IT, AND THEN MINCED IT FINELY,
14
I AGREE.
BUT... THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE DRY, CRUMBLY TEXTURE OF THIS POWDERED BOTTARGA AND THE SLIMY FEEL OF THE TUNA SASHIMI...
THE RICH FLAVOR OF THE BOTTARGA AND THE TASTE OF THE TUNA SURPRISINGLY DON'T CLASH AT ALL.
GOOD GRIEF...
THE SCENT OF THE GREEN PERILLA IS NEUTRALIZING THE RICHNESS OF BOTH, ISN'T IT?

SOYBEAN FLOUR ON TUNA?!
S-SOYBEAN FLOUR!
I WAS ONCE MADE TO EAT TUNA SASHIMI COATED IN KINAKO.
IT WAS AT A FAMOUS PRIVATE RESTAURANT IN KYOTO,
YES.
PLEASE, GIVE SOME TO EVERYONE.
.....
HMM...
THE ONE DUSTED WITH MULLET ROE FELT A BIT POWDERY, BUT THIS IS LITERALLY LIKE EATING POWDER...
THIS TASTE... IT'S LIKE IT DENIES EVERY CONCEPT WE HAVE OF WHAT TUNA SASHIMI SHOULD BE...
HAHA! THAT'S HARD TO BELIEVE.
OH MY! IT REALLY IS TUNA SASHIMI COVERED IN SOYBEAN FLOUR!

APPARENTLY, IT HAS A GOOD REPUTATION AMONG THE NOTABLES BECAUSE THE IDEA IS SO ECCENTRIC.
HOWEVER, THAT SHOP IS A PLACE WHERE NOTABLES FROM ALL OVER JAPAN GATHER,
THE ROASTED SOYBEAN FLOUR JUST ABSORBS THE TUNA'S SAVORINESS AND NEVER LETS IT OUT.
BROTHER, WITH THIS, THE FLAVOR OF THE TUNA DOESN'T MELT ONTO THE TONGUE AT ALL, DOES IT?
I THOUGHT SO TOO.
THIS CLEARLY SHOWS JUST HOW MUCH THOSE SO-CALLED JAPANESE NOTABLES AND INTELLECTUALS ARE IRRESPONSIBLE, SHAMEFUL PEOPLE WHO LACK SELF-CONFIDENCE.
IT'S A COMPLETE LAUGHINGSTOCK.
16
I DOUBT THE CREATOR HIMSELF IS EVEN CONVINCED THAT THIS IS DELICIOUS.
BUT WHEN YOU OVERTHINK THINGS, THE CONCEPT TENDS TO RUN AHEAD OF THE ACTUAL TASTE.
PERHAPS IT WAS A DESPERATE MEASURE BORN FROM BEING TOO SERIOUS...
LOOKING BACK AT THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE CUISINE, THEY MUST HAVE THOUGHT AND THOUGHT UNTIL THEY WERE EXHAUSTED, WONDERING IF THERE WAS SOMETHING OTHER THAN WASABI THAT PAIRED WITH TUNA...
THE PERSON WHO CAME UP WITH THIS MUST BE A VERY SERIOUS INDIVIDUAL.

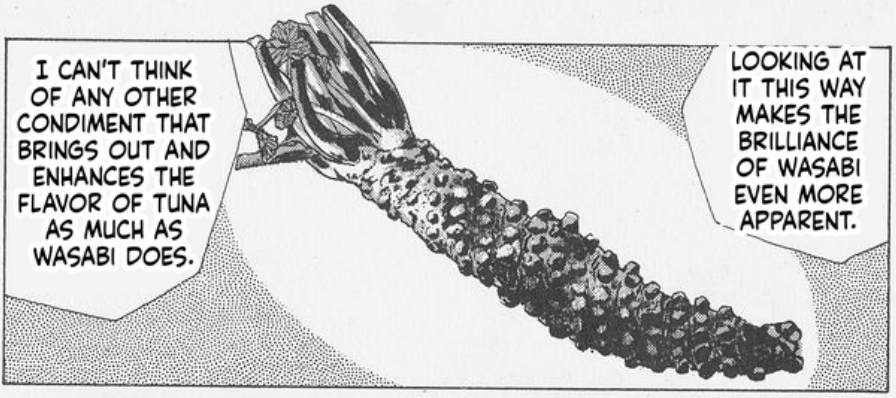

I'M SORRY, BUT THIS IS NO GOOD...
WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING THAT IT DEEPLY WOUNDS THE CHEF HIMSELF.
WITHOUT KNOWING THAT SUFFERING, FOOLISH CUSTOMERS ASSUME THE FOOD IS DELICIOUS JUST BECAUSE OF THE CHEF'S FAME, AND THEY CALL IT TASTY.
I'M SORRY TO MY BROTHER, BUT...
THAT'S...
I TRIED SEVERAL VARIETIES TO SEE IF THERE WAS A CONDIMENT THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO EAT TUNA MORE DELICIOUSLY,
AND SO,
RYOZO, THE REASON I SERVED THIS TO EVERYONE TODAY WAS TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH ABOUT CONDIMENTS.
WELL, WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT SURPASSED THE WASABI?
17
IF THAT'S THE CASE... IT MEANS THERE'S ANOTHER REASON FOR USING CONDIMENTS, RIGHT?
IT IS GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT THEY ARE USED TO ELIMINATE THE FISHY SMELL.
IF YOU'RE ASKING WHY CONDIMENTS, REPRESENTED BY WASABI, ARE NECESSARY WHEN EATING SASHIMI,
THE TRUTH ABOUT CONDIMENTS?


TO EXPAND IT...
TO DRAW OUT THE UMAMI...
IT'S TRUE, TOFU IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONDIMENTS LIES IN DRAWING OUT AND EXPANDING THE UMAMI.
THE MEANING OF CONDIMENTS DOES NOT LIE IN THE PASSIVE PURPOSE OF MASKING ODORS.

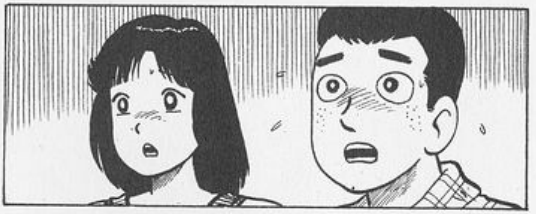

WITHOUT THEM, THE TRUE FLAVOR OF THE INGREDIENTS CAN'T BE BROUGHT OUT —THAT'S HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE!
MY BROTHER IS RIGHT. CONDIMENTS AREN'T JUST SOME OPTIONAL EXTRA YOU CAN DO WITHOUT!
CONDIMENTS AREN'T JUST DECORATIONS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
THEY EXIST TO EXPAND THE FLAVOR OF THE TOFU, DON'T THEY?
TOFU ITSELF DOESN'T HAVE AN UNPLEASANT ODOR, YET WE STILL USE CONDIMENTS WITH IT.

18

KELP, MULLET ROE, AND JAPANESE MUSTARD... IT'S NOT AS IF YOU CAN'T TASTE THE TRUE VALUE OF TUNA WITHOUT THEM.
NOW... SINCE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT MUCH, IT SHOULD BE CLEAR FROM ANY ANGLE THAT THE SAUCES AND CONDIMENTS I PREPARED TODAY ARE SEVERAL STEPS BELOW WASABI.


I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER CONDIMENT THAT BRINGS OUT AND ENHANCES THE FLAVOR OF TUNA AS MUCH AS WASABI DOES.
LOOKING AT IT THIS WAY MAKES THE BRILLIANCE OF WASABI EVEN MORE APPARENT.

HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE OTHER POSSIBILITY.
A POSSIBILITY?

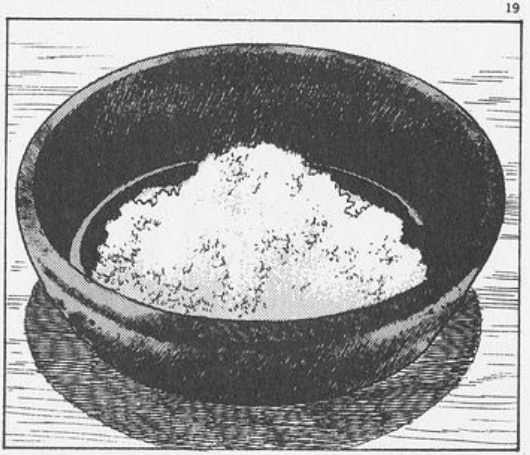


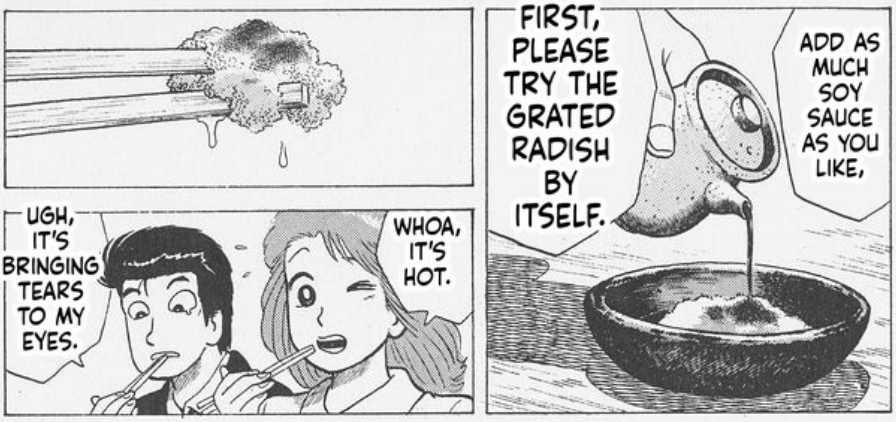
IT LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE UP ENTIRELY...

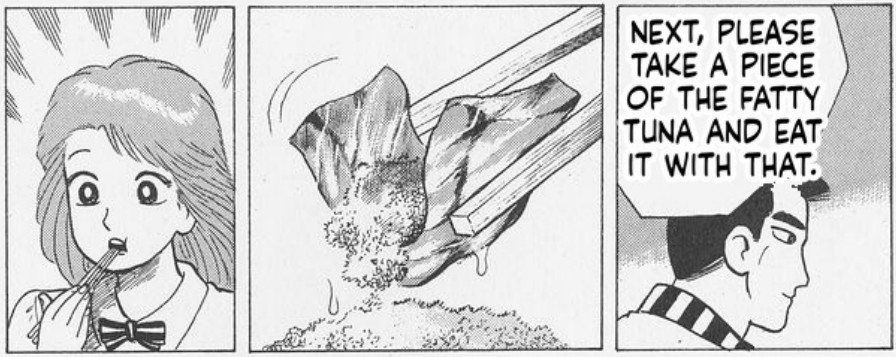
IF EVEN OKABOSHI-SAN SAYS THAT...

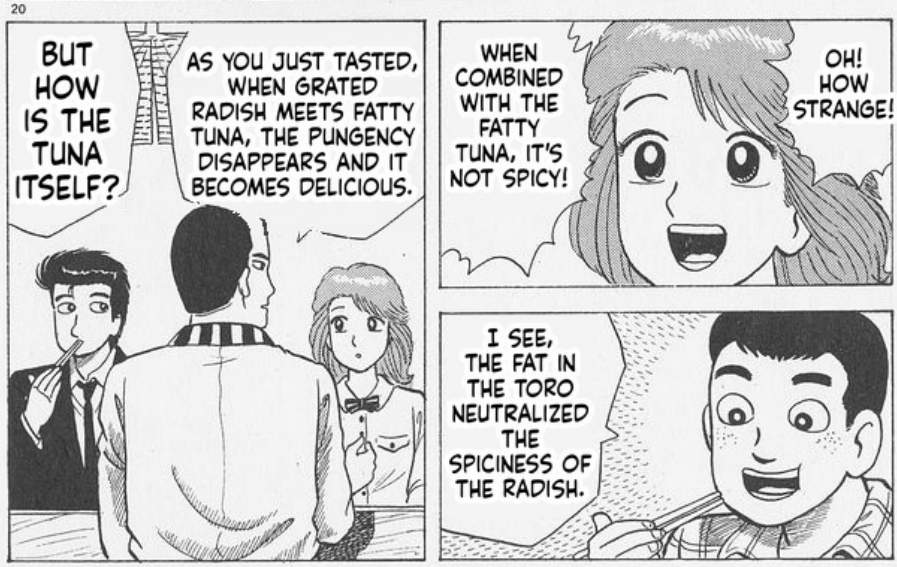
19

THIS IS GRATED DAIKON RADISH...




FIRST, PLEASE TRY THE GRATED RADISH BY ITSELF.
ADD AS MUCH SOY SAUCE AS YOU LIKE,
UGH, IT'S BRINGING TEARS TO MY EYES.
WHOA, IT'S HOT.

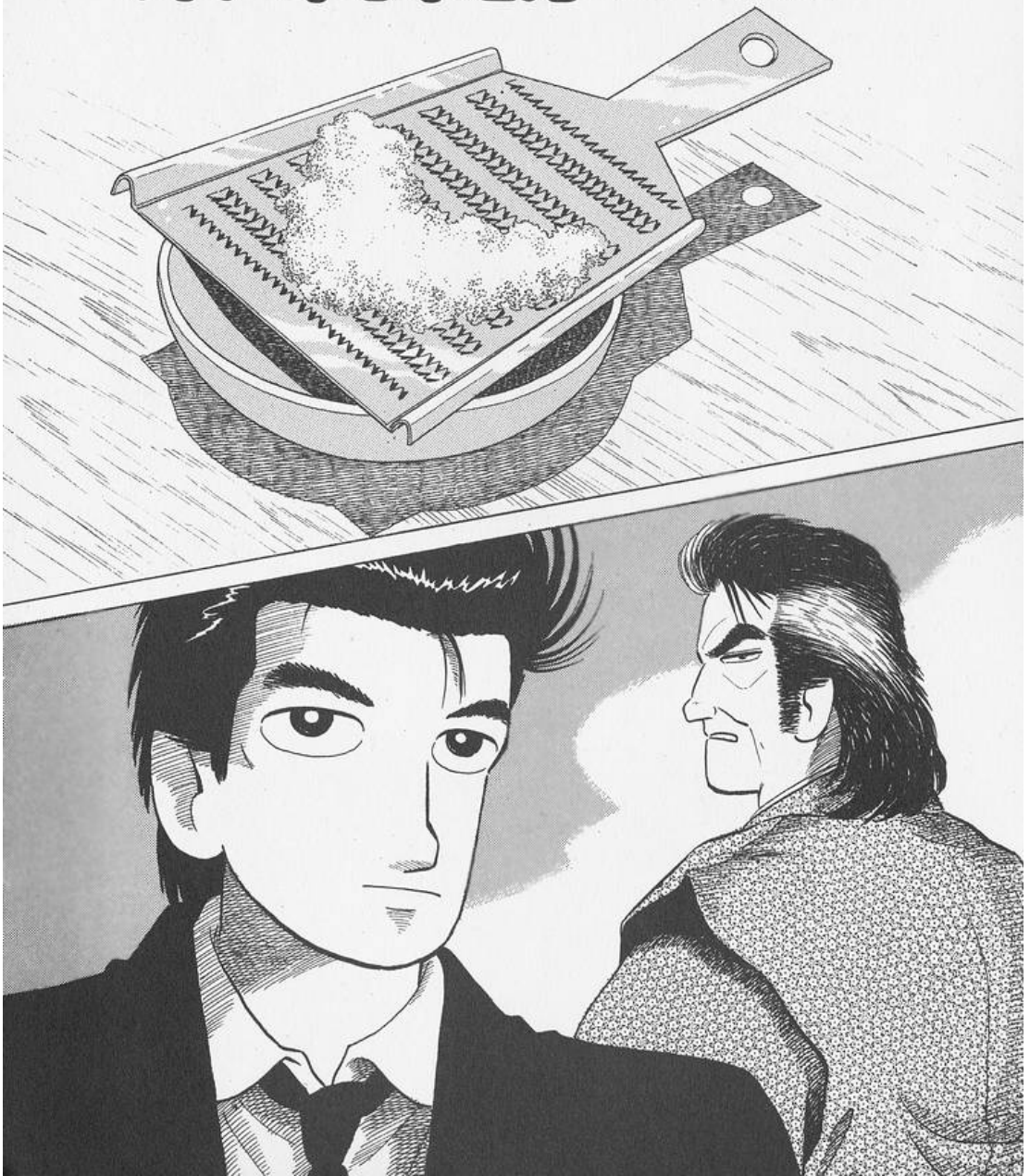

NEXT, PLEASE TAKE A PIECE OF THE FATTY TUNA AND EAT IT WITH THAT.


BUT HOW IS THE TUNA ITSELF?
AS YOU JUST TASTED, WHEN GRATED RADISH MEETS FATTY TUNA, THE PUNGENCY DISAPPEARS AND IT BECOMES DELICIOUS.
WHEN COMBINED WITH THE FATTY TUNA, IT'S NOT SPICY!
OH! HOW STRANGE!
I SEE, THE FAT IN THE TORO NEUTRALIZED THE SPICINESS OF THE RADISH.

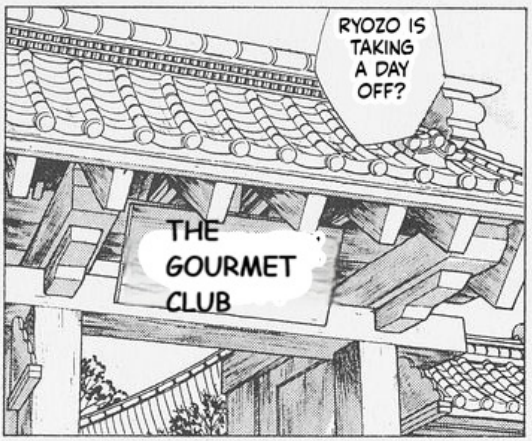
HOWEVER, YOU COULDN'T SAY IT FULLY BRINGS OUT THE UMAMI OF THE TUNA.
NOT BAD... IT'S NOT A BAD MATCH...
I DON'T THINK IT'S A BAD MATCH.
NOT BAD.
THAT'S BECAUSE GRATED RADISH INEVITABLY HAS TOO MUCH MOISTURE, WHICH DILUTES THE TASTE.
THAT'S TRUE...
IT'S INFERIOR TO WASABI...
21
IF SUCH A THING EXISTED...
SOMETHING WITH LESS WATER THAN RADISH, AND A MUCH STRONGER FLAVOR...
I DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE INFERIOR TO WASABI AT ALL...
IF THERE WERE SOMETHING THAT WORKED LIKE GRATED RADISH, BUT WITH LESS WATER AND A STRONGER FLAVOR,
IT MIGHT EVEN BECOME A CONDIMENT THAT SURPASSES WASABI...

.....
BUT SOMETHING LIKE THAT IS JUST...
THAT'S IF IT EVEN EXISTS. THAT'S WHY I SAID IT WAS A POSSIBILITY.
THERE'S AN INCREDIBLE CONDIMENT!
I KNOW!
IT'S DRIER THAN A RADISH...
THE FLAVOR IS SO STRONG...
AH... AAH...
22
WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT?!
WHAT!!

第4話
薬味探訪〈後編〉

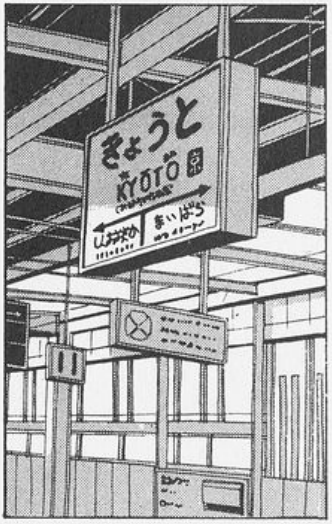


APPARENTLY HE'S GOING TO KYOTO.
YES.


RYOZO IS TAKING A DAY OFF?
THE GOURMET CLUB

TO KYOTO...

2

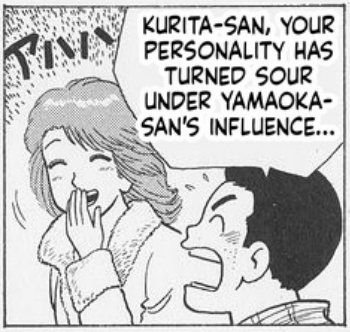

きょうと
KYOTO

I SEE, KYOTO...
HEH HEH.

HE PROBABLY JUST WANTED TO EAT SOMETHING DELICIOUS IN KYOTO AND USED THIS AS AN EXCUSE...
WHO KNOWS, YOU CAN'T TRUST HIM.

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE IN KYOTO?
WE'VE COME ALL THE WAY TO KYOTO, LED BY YAMAOKA-SAN, BUT...

HEY! I CAN HEAR YOU PERFECTLY FINE!


KURITA-SAN, YOUR PERSONALITY HAS TURNED SOUR UNDER YAMAOKA-SAN'S INFLUENCE...

.....

3

IS THERE SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT THIS SHOP?
THIS IS... A LONG-ESTABLISHED SOBA SHOP, IF I RECALL CORRECTLY.

EXACTLY, NOW GET IN, GET IN.

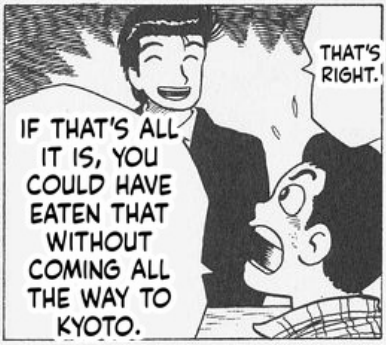
GO-AN

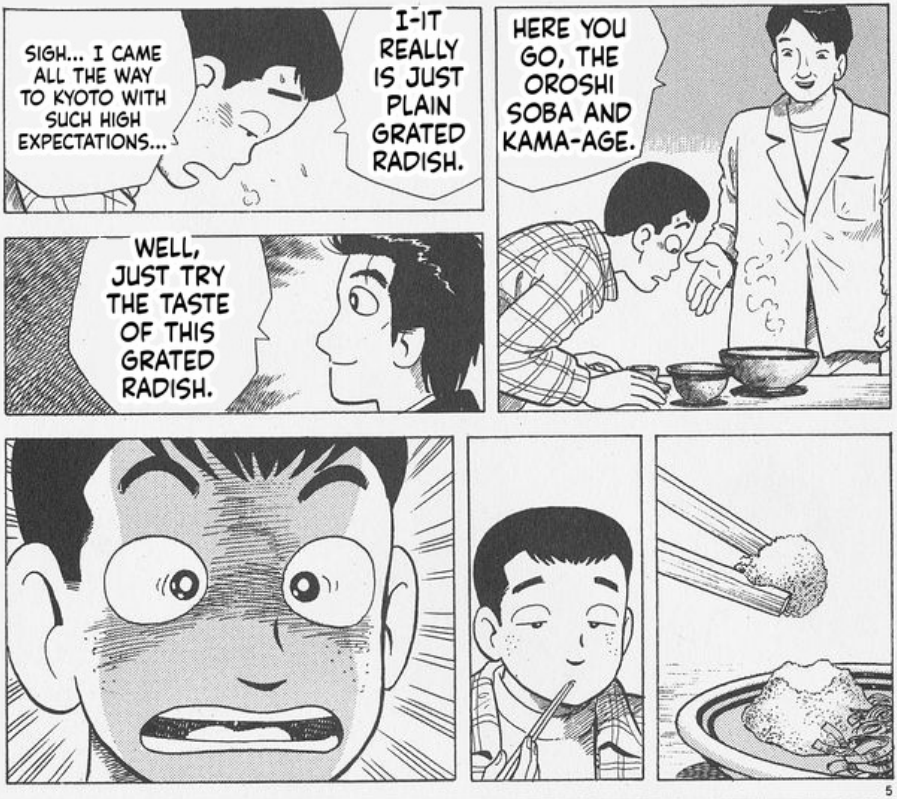
THE REASON I VISITED TODAY WAS SPECIFICALLY TO EAT YOUR OROSHI SOBA.

WELCOME, THANK YOU FOR COMING SUCH A LONG WAY.
THIS IS THE YOUNG MASTER, MR. UEDA, AND THE HEAD CHEF MR. MURASE.

SOBA AND GRATED DAIKON RADISH...
WHEN YOU SAY OROSHI SOBA,

GRATED DAIKON, HUH...

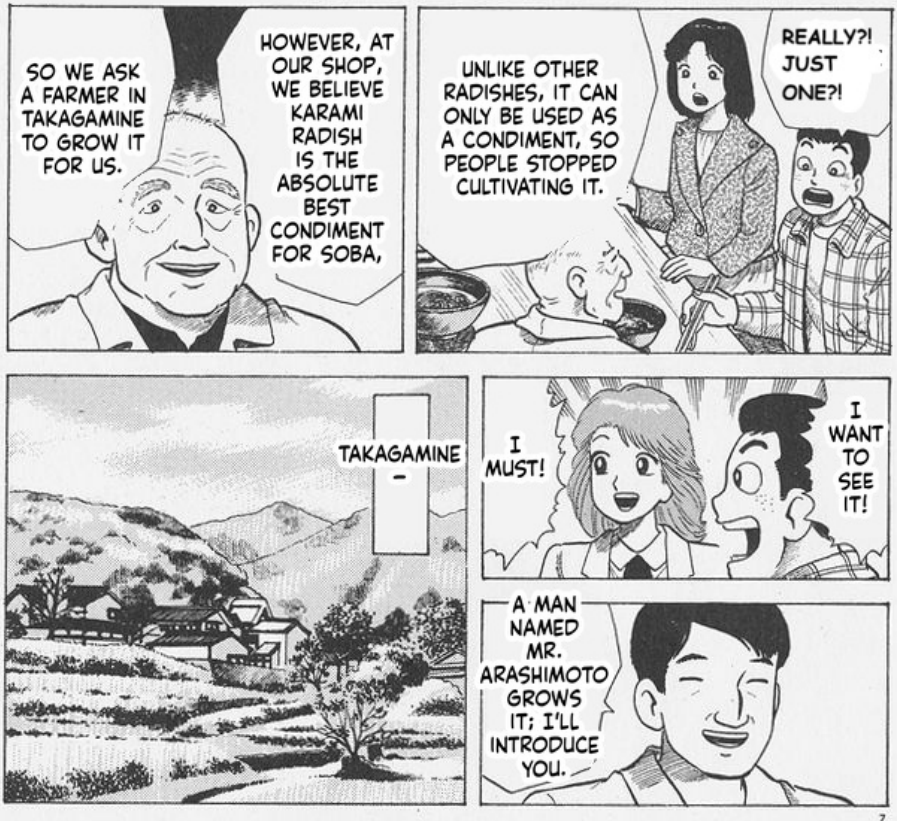

IF THAT'S ALL IT IS, YOU COULD HAVE EATEN THAT WITHOUT COMING ALL THE WAY TO KYOTO.
THAT'S RIGHT.


SIGH... I CAME ALL THE WAY TO KYOTO WITH SUCH HIGH EXPECTATIONS...
I-IT REALLY IS JUST PLAIN GRATED RADISH.
HERE YOU GO, THE OROSHI SOBA AND KAMA-AGE.
WELL, JUST TRY THE TASTE OF THIS GRATED RADISH.

5

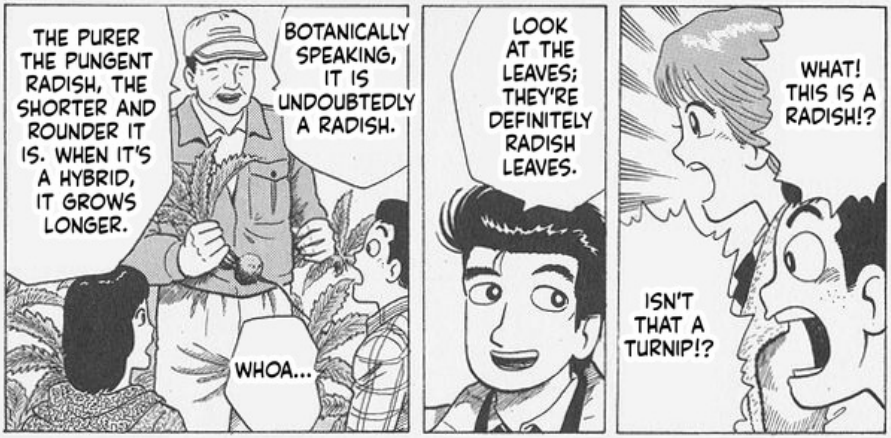
IT'S ONE OF KYOTO'S TRADITIONAL VEGETABLES.
THIS IS INDEED THE PUNGENT RADISH,
I-IT'S SPICY!
KARAMI DAIKON!
THIS ISN'T JUST ANY ORDINARY RADISH!

OH, YOU'RE RIGHT, IT DOESN'T HAVE THAT BITTERNESS LIKE NORMAL RADISHES.
EVEN THOUGH IT'S SPICY, YOU'LL NOTICE IT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE HEAT OF REGULAR GRATED RADISH.
THE SPICINESS DOESN'T LINGER; IT'S A TRULY CLEAN AND REFRESHING HEAT!
ズゥ
IT'S NOT AS HARSH AS WASABI, AND IT HAS A CERTAIN SWEETNESS TO IT TOO!
6
THE GRATED RADISH REALLY BRINGS OUT THE SWEETNESS OF THE BUCKWHEAT!
APPARENTLY, THIS SPICY RADISH HAS BEEN GROWN FOR ABOUT 370 YEARS.
BUT NOW, THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON IN KYOTO LEFT GROWING IT JUST FOR MY SHOP.
THE FLAVOR OF THE RADISH MAKES THE AROMA OF THE SOBA STAND OUT SO MUCH MORE CLEARLY...!

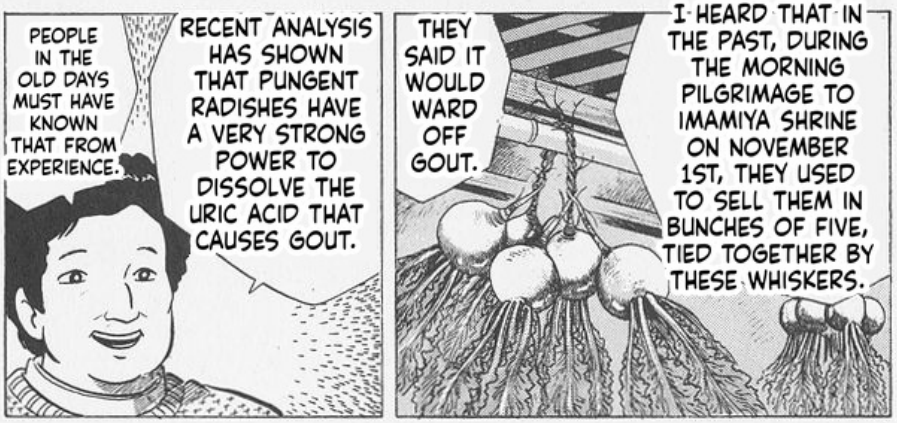

SO WE ASK A FARMER IN TAKAGAMINE TO GROW IT FOR US.
HOWEVER, AT OUR SHOP, WE BELIEVE KARAMI RADISH IS THE ABSOLUTE BEST CONDIMENT FOR SOBA,
UNLIKE OTHER RADISHES, IT CAN ONLY BE USED AS A CONDIMENT, SO PEOPLE STOPPED CULTIVATING IT.
REALLY?! JUST ONE?!
TAKAGAMINE —
I MUST!
I WANT TO SEE IT!
A MAN NAMED MR. ARASHIMOTO GROWS IT; I'LL INTRODUCE YOU.
7
WHAT?! ONLY THIS MUCH!
THIS IS THE KARAMI RADISH FIELD.

IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S A SHOP THAT KEEPS ORDERING THEM AND A FARMER WHO KEEPS GROWING THEM THAT HEIRLOOM VEGETABLES SURVIVE WITHOUT DYING OUT.
SO YOU CAN ONLY EAT THESE PUNGENT RADISHES AT MISOKA-AN KAWAMICHIYA!
THAT'S WHY ONLY KAWAMICHIYA CAN SERVE THEM.
I'LL GIVE YOU SOME TO TAKE HOME AS A SOUVENIR.

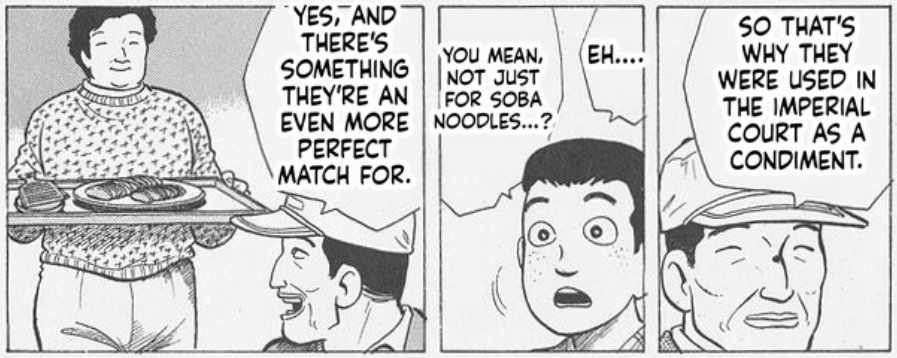
8

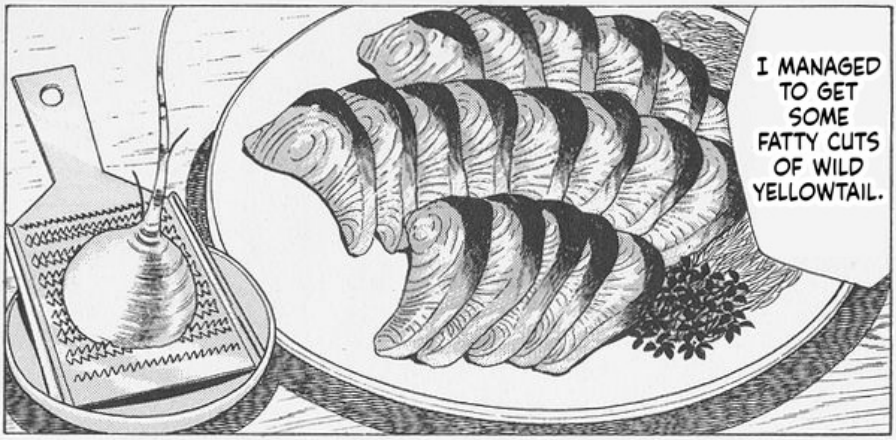

THE PURER THE PUNGENT RADISH, THE SHORTER AND ROUNDER IT IS. WHEN IT'S A HYBRID, IT GROWS LONGER.
BOTANICALLY SPEAKING, IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY A RADISH.
WHOA...
LOOK AT THE LEAVES; THEY'RE DEFINITELY RADISH LEAVES.
WHAT! THIS IS A RADISH!?
ISN'T THAT A TURNIP!?

DO ALL PUNGENT RADISHES HAVE SUCH LONG TAILS?
AH, WE CALL THEM 'WHISKERS'.


PEOPLE IN THE OLD DAYS MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT FROM EXPERIENCE.
RECENT ANALYSIS HAS SHOWN THAT PUNGENT RADISHES HAVE A VERY STRONG POWER TO DISSOLVE THE URIC ACID THAT CAUSES GOUT.
THEY SAID IT WOULD WARD OFF GOUT.
I HEARD THAT IN THE PAST, DURING THE MORNING PILGRIMAGE TO IMAMIYA SHRINE ON NOVEMBER 1ST, THEY USED TO SELL THEM IN BUNCHES OF FIVE, TIED TOGETHER BY THESE WHISKERS.

9

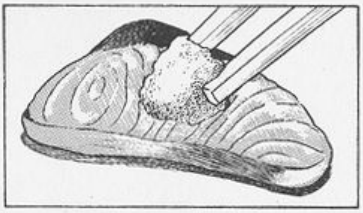

YES, AND THERE'S SOMETHING THEY'RE AN EVEN MORE PERFECT MATCH FOR.
YOU MEAN, NOT JUST FOR SOBA NOODLES...?
EH....
SO THAT'S WHY THEY WERE USED IN THE IMPERIAL COURT AS A CONDIMENT.


I MANAGED TO GET SOME FATTY CUTS OF WILD YELLOWTAIL.

IT'S BEST TO GRATE IT USING THE FINEST GRATER POSSIBLE.

YOU'RE USING SPICY RADISH AS A CONDIMENT FOR SASHIMI?!

10



UNLIKE NORMAL RADISHES, NO JUICE COMES OUT AT ALL WHEN YOU GRATE IT.

THE DELICIOUSNESS OF THE YELLOWTAIL EXPANDS SO SOFTLY!
AND YET, IT COMPLETELY ELIMINATES THE FATTINESS, THE OILINESS, AND THE FISHINESS OF THE YELLOWTAIL,
WHEN EATEN WITH THE YELLOWTAIL SASHIMI, THE SPICINESS ALMOST COMPLETELY VANISHES!
IS THERE ANY OTHER CONDIMENT THAT COULD DRAW OUT AND EXPAND THE FLAVOR OF YELLOWTAIL SASHIMI THIS MUCH?
WITH THIS, THE CHALLENGE KAIBARA-SENSEI GAVE ME IS SOLVED!
THE ANSWER IS SPICY DAIKON RADISH!
I THINK THE SAME APPLIES TO TUNA, TOO!
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ゴォー
YES, IT WILL.
11
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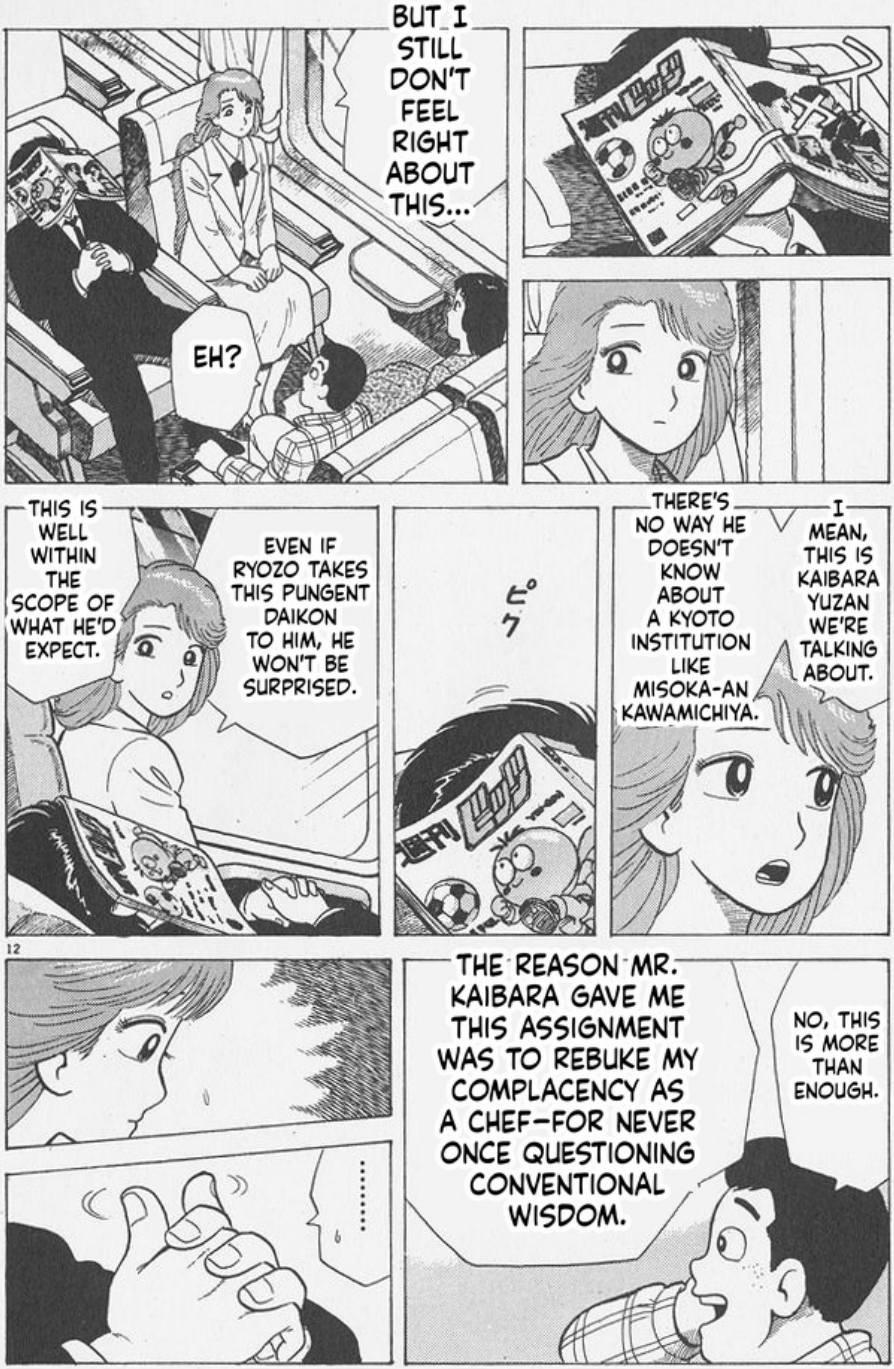
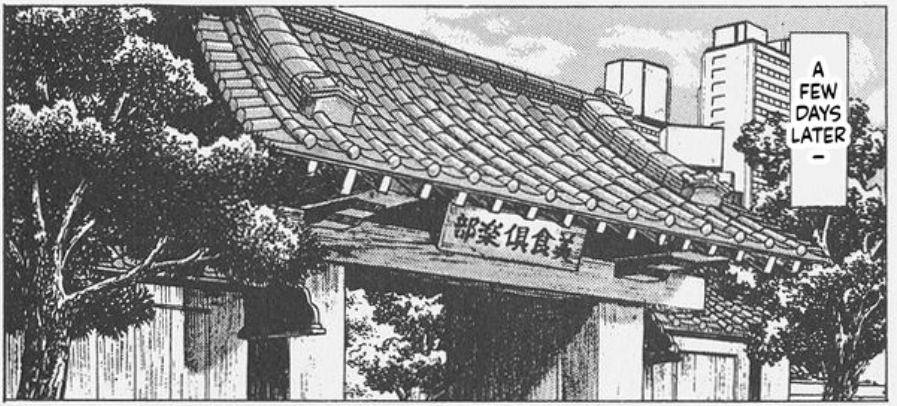

BUT I STILL DON'T FEEL RIGHT ABOUT THIS...
EH?
I MEAN, THIS IS KAIBARA YUZAN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
THERE'S NO WAY HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT A KYOTO INSTITUTION LIKE MISOKA-AN KAWAMICHIYA.
ピク
EVEN IF RYOZO TAKES THIS PUNGENT DAIKON TO HIM, HE WON'T BE SURPRISED.
THIS IS WELL WITHIN THE SCOPE OF WHAT HE'D EXPECT.
12
NO, THIS IS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
THE REASON MR. KAIBARA GAVE ME THIS ASSIGNMENT WAS TO REBUKE MY COMPLACENCY AS A CHEF—FOR NEVER ONCE QUESTIONING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM.
.....

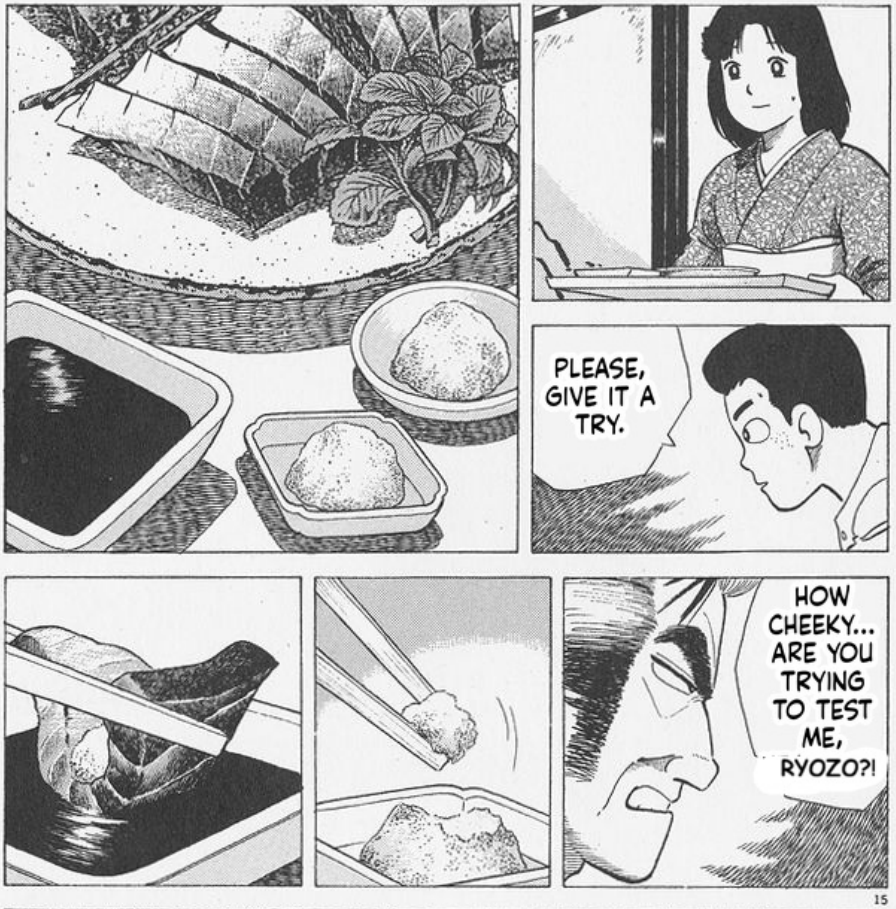
NO WAY.
ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULDN'T IT BE FUNNY IF THERE WERE TURNIPS SHAPED LONG LIKE RADISHES?
IT'S A RADISH, YET IT'S SHAPED EXACTLY LIKE A TURNIP.
BUT REALLY, PUNGENT RADISHES ARE QUITE FASCINATING.
WE'RE GOING TO IWATE!
WHAT ARE YOU DAYDREAMING ABOUT!
TO IWATE?!
13
THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE ONE!
WHOA!


A FEW DAYS LATER —

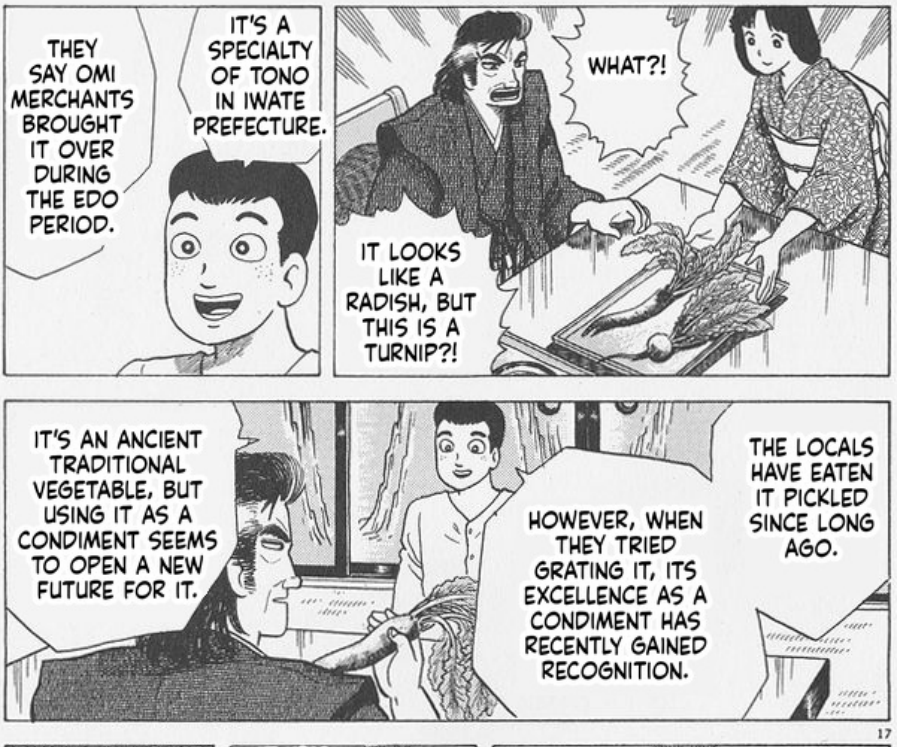
ズズ…
ズー
IT'S JUST AS I THOUGHT, BUT I SUPPOSE IT'LL DO...
HMM, GRATED RADISH SOBA, IS IT...

14

NO... THIS ISN'T SPICY DAIKON...
THIS IS...
WH-WHAT?!


PLEASE, GIVE IT A TRY.
HOW CHEEKY... ARE YOU TRYING TO TEST ME, RYOZO?!
15
HMM, THIS IS SPICY DAIKON RADISH.
LIKE WASABI, IT DOESN'T ASSERT ITS OWN PRESENCE, BUT INSTEAD ALLOWS THE UMAMI LOCKED DEEP WITHIN THE TUNA TO BLOOM SOFTLY.
FOR TUNA, IT IS THE ULTIMATE CONDIMENT.

THE AROMA IS RUSTIC AND STRANGELY NOSTALGIC...
BUT THERE IS A DECISIVE DIFFERENCE FROM SPICY DAIKON...
THAT IS THE SCENT OF THE EARTH...
THIS ONE HAS A MILDER CHARACTER, YET IT CLOSELY RESEMBLES SPICY DAIKON.
HMM... THIS ALSO LIGHTLY WASHES AWAY THE FATTINESS OF THE FATTY TUNA, BRINGING OUT ITS HIDDEN, SUBTLE FLAVORS.
IT IS INDEED A TURNIP!
YES, SENSEI!
COULD IT BE THAT THIS IS A TURNIP?
THIS... IT LOOKS LIKE GRATED DAIKON, BUT IT ISN'T...
THE LONG ONE IS A KURETSUBO TURNIP.
THE ROUND ONE IS THE SPICY DAIKON YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH, SENSEI.


THEY SAY OMI MERCHANTS BROUGHT IT OVER DURING THE EDO PERIOD.
IT'S A SPECIALTY OF TONO IN IWATE PREFECTURE.
WHAT?!
IT LOOKS LIKE A RADISH, BUT THIS IS A TURNIP?!
IT'S AN ANCIENT TRADITIONAL VEGETABLE, BUT USING IT AS A CONDIMENT SEEMS TO OPEN A NEW FUTURE FOR IT.
HOWEVER, WHEN THEY TRIED GRATING IT, ITS EXCELLENCE AS A CONDIMENT HAS RECENTLY GAINED RECOGNITION.
THE LOCALS HAVE EATEN IT PICKLED SINCE LONG AGO.
17
IT WILL SURELY BECOME A SPECIALTY OF THE GOURMET CLUB!
YES, SIR!
LET'S CALL THIS GRATED SOBA MADE WITH KURETSUBO TURNIP 'KURETSUBO SOBA'.
INDEED. RYOZO, RESEARCH FURTHER INTO HOW ELSE WE CAN USE THIS AS A CONDIMENT AT THE CLUB.
BUT WHERE DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THIS KURETSUBO TURNIP?
GUESTS WITH TIRED STOMACHS WILL SURELY BE DELIGHTED.

TONO, IWATE PREFECTURE
ACTUALLY...
THANKS TO KUNIO YANAGITA, WE BECAME FAMOUS AS THE VILLAGE OF FOLKLORE,
YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE MET WHO CAME TO TONO FOR TURNIPS INSTEAD OF FOLKLORE.
18
SO THIS IS WHAT WE CAME FOR...
YEAH.
THIS IS THE KURETSUBO TURNIP.

IT'S DEFINITELY A TURNIP.
NO, TAKE A LOOK AT THE LEAVES.

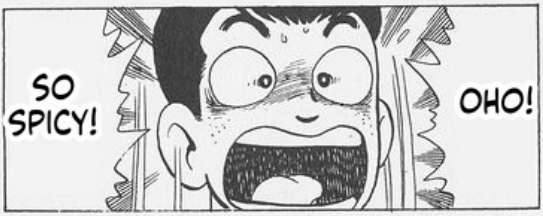
AH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

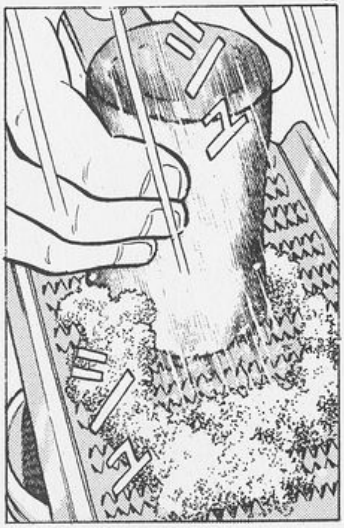
ISN'T THIS JUST A RADISH?!
EH?! THIS IS A TURNIP?!

民宿
TONO-KAN

IT'S A TURNIP, BUT IT LOOKS JUST LIKE A RADISH, SO IT LEFT QUITE AN IMPRESSION ON ME.
BACK WHEN I WAS A STUDENT, I CAME TO TONO ON A BUDGET TRIP AND STAYED AT A GUESTHOUSE WHERE THEY MADE ME HELP HARVEST THESE KURETSUBO TURNIPS.

19


SO SPICY!
OHO!

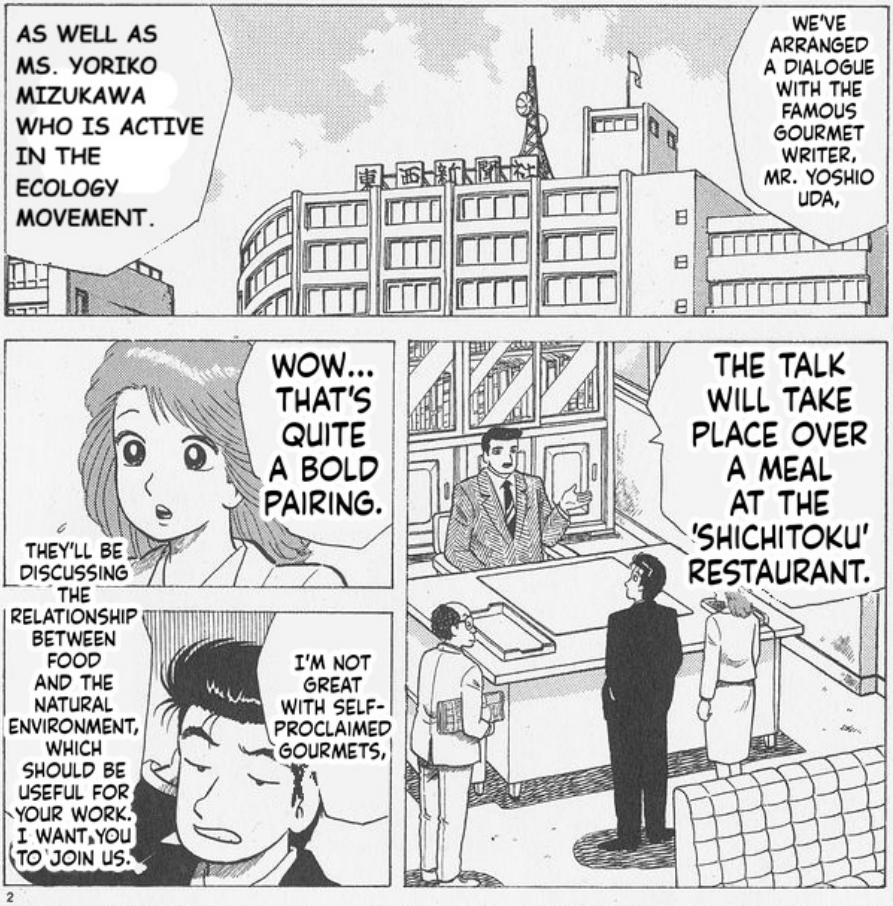


YAMAOKA-SAN, THIS IS IT!
A WORTHY RIVAL FOR THE SPICY DAIKON HAS APPEARED!
BUT IT'S DELICIOUS!
WHOA, THAT'S GOT A KICK!
GIVE HIM THIS...
20
ENOUGH, LEAVE US!
TO SEEK HELP FROM THE LIKES OF SHIRO! WHAT A DISGRACE!
SO SHIRO STUCK HIS NOSE IN, DID HE...?
I DIDN'T SOLVE THIS ASSIGNMENT THROUGH MY OWN ABILITY. I HAVE FAILED.
RYOZO-SAN.

CHAIRMAN NINOMIYA OF IMPERIAL POWER IS COMING TONIGHT.
SERVE THE KURETSUBO SOBA AS THE FINALE OF THE MEAL AT ONCE.
Y-YES, SIR...
BESIDES, KURETSUBO TURNIPS AREN'T SHIRO'S EXCLUSIVE MONOPOLY.
I DIDN'T STIPULATE THAT SEEKING HELP FROM OTHERS WOULD RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FOR THE TASK I GAVE YOU, SO IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
SO, I HAVEN'T BEEN FIRED?!

YOU CAN'T LIE TO MR. KAIBARA.
BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE FELT RIGHT IF I DIDN'T.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOLD HIM THAT YAMAOKA-SAN HELPED YOU...
岡星
THAT MAN DOESN'T HAVE A SHRED OF GENEROSITY IN HIM.
IT'S JUST BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE A TALENTED CHEF LIKE RYOZO-KUN.
MR. KAIBARA HAS SUCH A BIG HEART, HE TRULY ACKNOWLEDGED RYOZO'S HARD WORK...
22
IF YOU CONTINUE TO ONLY SEE THE WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE, YOU'LL NEVER BEAT HIM. YOU SHOULD REFLECT ON THAT!
HMM? AHHH.
YAMAOKA-SAN, SAY 'AHHH'.

第5話
野菜今昔物語


AS WELL AS MS. YORIKO MIZUKAWA WHO IS ACTIVE IN THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT.
WE'VE ARRANGED A DIALOGUE WITH THE FAMOUS GOURMET WRITER, MR. YOSHIO UDA,
WOW... THAT'S QUITE A BOLD PAIRING.
THEY'LL BE DISCUSSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, WHICH SHOULD BE USEFUL FOR YOUR WORK. I WANT YOU TO JOIN US.
I'M NOT GREAT WITH SELF-PROCLAIMED GOURMETS,
THE TALK WILL TAKE PLACE OVER A MEAL AT THE 'SHICHITOKU' RESTAURANT.
2
WE GET TO EAT WITH THEM TOO?! IN THAT CASE, I'M IN!
DID I MENTION THE MEAL IS COMPED BY TOZAI NEWS?
CAN'T YOU GET SOMEONE ELSE TO GO INSTEAD?

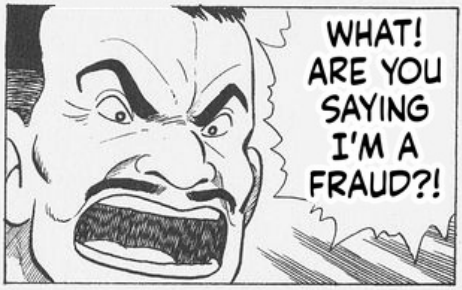
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME OUT OF YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE TO BE WITH US TODAY.
SONY

WE WOULD ALL BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD SPEAK TO THOSE SORTS OF PROBLEMS.
ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION HAS PROGRESSED SO MUCH LATELY THAT WE CAN NO LONGER IGNORE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO WHAT WE EAT.

3

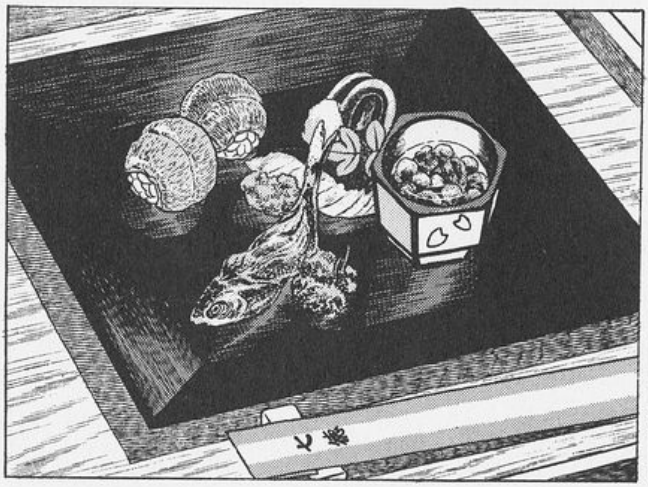
MAKING A SCENE ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MAKING SUCH A FUSS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION LATELY,

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT...
OF COURSE, YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
TO LIVE, HUMANS MUST EAT, DRINK, AND EXCRETE.
HUMAN EXISTENCE ITSELF IS ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION.
DOMESTIC WASTEWATER IS A MAJOR CULPRIT WHEN IT COMES TO ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION.
ONCE YOU GET USED TO A FLUSH TOILET, YOU CAN NEVER GO BACK TO AN OUTHOUSE.
HUMANS ARE DRIVEN TO SEEK A BETTER LIFE.
I DON'T THINK WE CAN JUST LEAVE THINGS AS THEY ARE JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE NECESSARY.
4
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
BUT COULD TODAY'S SOCIETY EVEN FUNCTION WITHOUT CARS?!
SAME GOES FOR CAR EXHAUST. WE KNOW IT'S BAD.
EVEN IF YOU GROW VEGETABLES, IF THERE ARE NO TRUCKS TO CARRY THEM, THEY'LL JUST ROT WITHOUT ANYONE GETTING TO EAT THEM.


WHAT! ARE YOU SAYING I'M A FRAUD?!

LACK OF FOOD IS A MUCH BIGGER PROBLEM THAN EXHAUST FUMES.
THE REASON JAPANESE LIFE EXPECTANCY HAS INCREASED SO DRAMATICALLY IS BECAUSE NUTRITIOUS FOOD HAS BECOME AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE.
THAT'S JUST A DECEPTIVE WAY OF PUTTING IT.

PROFESSOR UDA, PLEASE, DON'T GET SO UPSET...



5

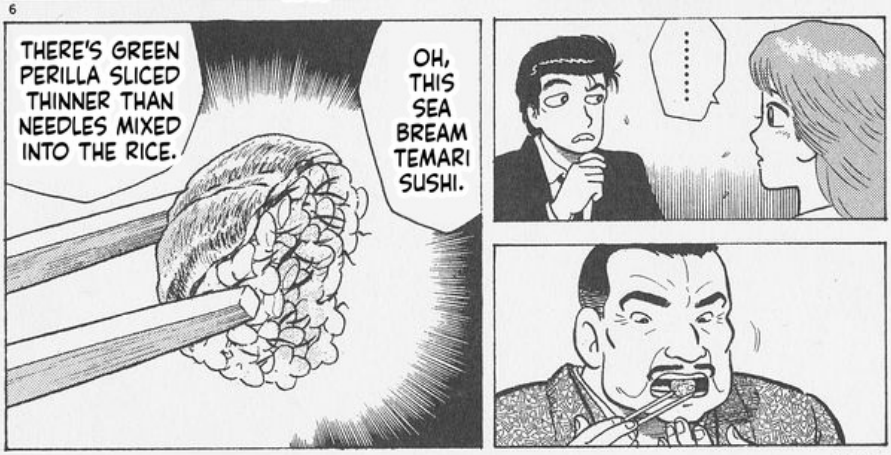
WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT?
ﾁﾗｯ

I HAVE MY OWN CHOPSTICKS.

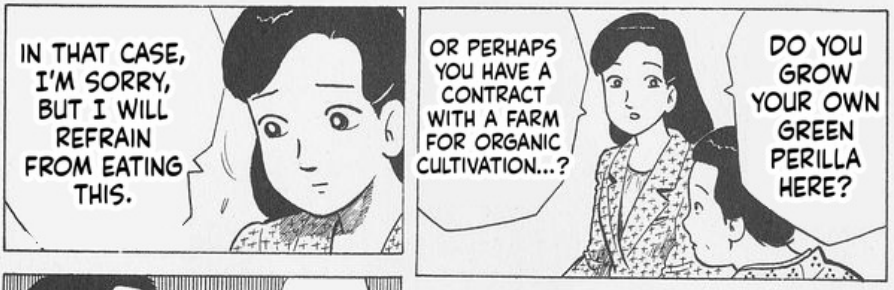
HUH?
I DON'T NEED THIS, SO I'M RETURNING IT TO YOU.

DON'T TALK NONSENSE.
THAT'S WHY I MAKE IT A POINT TO CARRY MY OWN CHOPSTICKS, SO AS NOT TO BE WASTEFUL.
DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS LIKE WARIBASHI AND RIKYUBASHI ARE A WASTE OF WOOD AND A CAUSE OF DEFORESTATION.
NO MATTER HOW SMALL IT MAY BE, ISN'T STARTING WITH WHAT YOU CAN DO THE MOST IMPORTANT THING?
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY 1%, SAVING IS IMPORTANT.
GOOD GRIEF, I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOU!
BESIDES, THEY'RE MADE FROM WOOD SCRAPS THAT HAVE NO OTHER USE.
THE WOOD USED FOR DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY ABOUT 1% OF JAPAN'S TOTAL TIMBER CONSUMPTION.
THE IDEA THAT STOPPING THE USE OF DISPOSABLE CHOPSTICKS WILL PREVENT DEFORESTATION IS NOTHING BUT A JOKE.

6

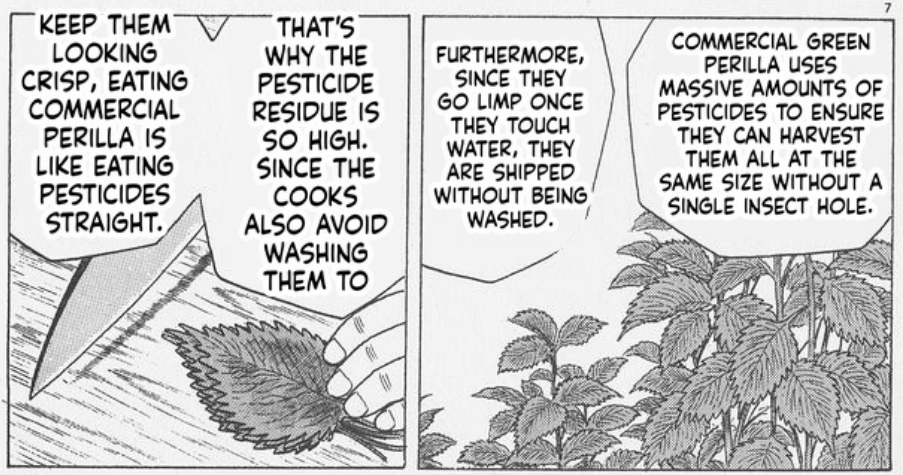

THERE'S GREEN PERILLA SLICED THINNER THAN NEEDLES MIXED INTO THE RICE.
OH, THIS SEA BREAM TEMARI SUSHI.
.....

I SEE... THE GREEN PERILLA?
THIS IS DELICIOUS. YOU MUST TRY IT.
BY MINCING IT THIS FINELY, YOU CAN ENJOY THE FLAVOR OF THE GREEN PERILLA WITHOUT THAT COARSE TEXTURE.


IN THAT CASE, I'M SORRY, BUT I WILL REFRAIN FROM EATING THIS.
OR PERHAPS YOU HAVE A CONTRACT WITH A FARM FOR ORGANIC CULTIVATION...?
DO YOU GROW YOUR OWN GREEN PERILLA HERE?

WHY IS THAT?
NO... WE CAN'T GO QUITE THAT FAR OURSELVES, SO WE SOURCE IT FROM THE MARKET.

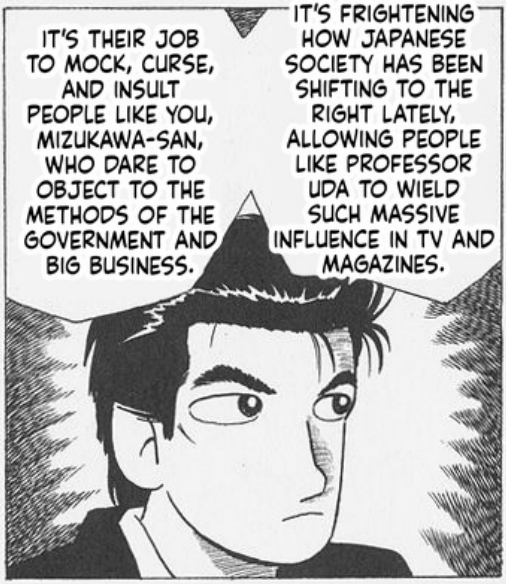
7

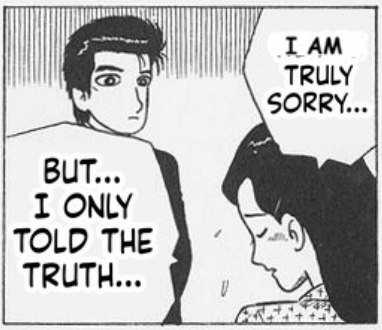

KEEP THEM LOOKING CRISP, EATING COMMERCIAL PERILLA IS LIKE EATING PESTICIDES STRAIGHT.
THAT'S WHY THE PESTICIDE RESIDUE IS SO HIGH. SINCE THE COOKS ALSO AVOID WASHING THEM TO
FURTHERMORE, SINCE THEY GO LIMP ONCE THEY TOUCH WATER, THEY ARE SHIPPED WITHOUT BEING WASHED.
COMMERCIAL GREEN PERILLA USES MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF PESTICIDES TO ENSURE THEY CAN HARVEST THEM ALL AT THE SAME SIZE WITHOUT A SINGLE INSECT HOLE.

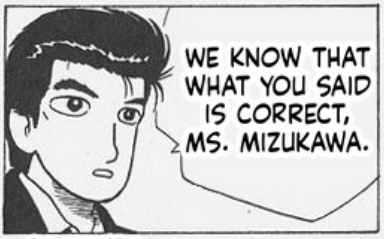
NO MATTER HOW GOOD IT TASTES, DANGEROUS FOOD IS...
HOW UNPLEASANT! ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND FAULT WITH SOMETHING PEOPLE ARE EATING AND CALLING DELICIOUS?!
むくDD
FARMING WITHOUT PESTICIDES IS INCREDIBLY BACKBREAKING LABOR! IT'S WAY TOO SELFISH OF YOU TO DEMAND SUCH GRUELING WORK FROM FARMERS JUST FOR YOUR OWN BENEFIT!
COMPLAINING ABOUT PESTICIDES NOW IS COMPLETELY OUTDATED! THOSE WHO USE THEM FOLLOW STRICT SAFETY STANDARDS!
8
PARDON THE INTRUSION!
UGH, I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH SUCH IDIOTIC ARGUMENTS!
PROFESSOR UDA, PLEASE WAIT!
BESIDES, CONSIDERING HOW LONG THE AVERAGE JAPANESE LIFESPAN IS, PESTICIDES CLEARLY AREN'T BAD FOR THE BODY!
OH MY!

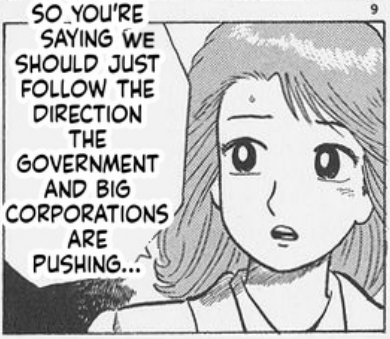
IT'S ALREADY BEEN RUINED FOR A LONG TIME NOW.

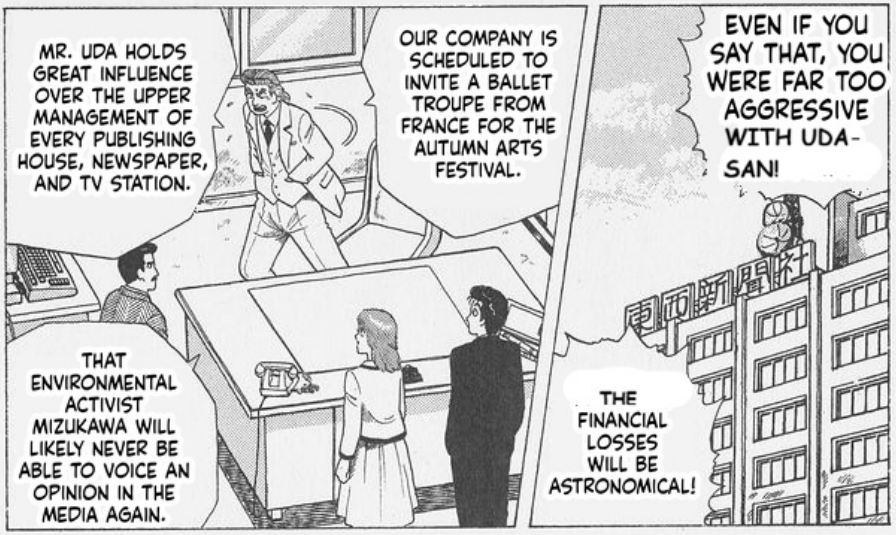
JUST LEAVE IT ALONE.
WHY?! THIS CROSS-TALK PROJECT IS GOING TO BE RUINED!

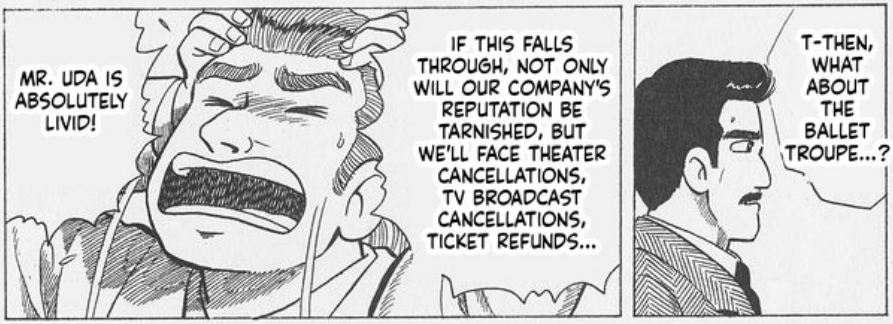

IT'S THEIR JOB TO MOCK, CURSE, AND INSULT PEOPLE LIKE YOU, MIZUKAWA-SAN, WHO DARE TO OBJECT TO THE METHODS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND BIG BUSINESS.
IT'S FRIGHTENING HOW JAPANESE SOCIETY HAS BEEN SHIFTING TO THE RIGHT LATELY, ALLOWING PEOPLE LIKE PROFESSOR UDA TO WIELD SUCH MASSIVE INFLUENCE IN TV AND MAGAZINES.


I AM TRULY SORRY...
BUT... I ONLY TOLD THE TRUTH...


WE KNOW THAT WHAT YOU SAID IS CORRECT, MS. MIZUKAWA.


SO YOU'RE SAYING WE SHOULD JUST FOLLOW THE DIRECTION THE GOVERNMENT AND BIG CORPORATIONS ARE PUSHING...


MR. UDA HOLDS GREAT INFLUENCE OVER THE UPPER MANAGEMENT OF EVERY PUBLISHING HOUSE, NEWSPAPER, AND TV STATION.
OUR COMPANY IS SCHEDULED TO INVITE A BALLET TROUPE FROM FRANCE FOR THE AUTUMN ARTS FESTIVAL.
EVEN IF YOU SAY THAT, YOU WERE FAR TOO AGGRESSIVE WITH UDA-SAN!
THAT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST MIZUKAWA WILL LIKELY NEVER BE ABLE TO VOICE AN OPINION IN THE MEDIA AGAIN.
THE FINANCIAL LOSSES WILL BE ASTRONOMICAL!


MR. UDA IS ABSOLUTELY LIVID!
IF THIS FALLS THROUGH, NOT ONLY WILL OUR COMPANY'S REPUTATION BE TARNISHED, BUT WE'LL FACE THEATER CANCELLATIONS, TV BROADCAST CANCELLATIONS, TICKET REFUNDS...
T-THEN, WHAT ABOUT THE BALLET TROUPE...?

10

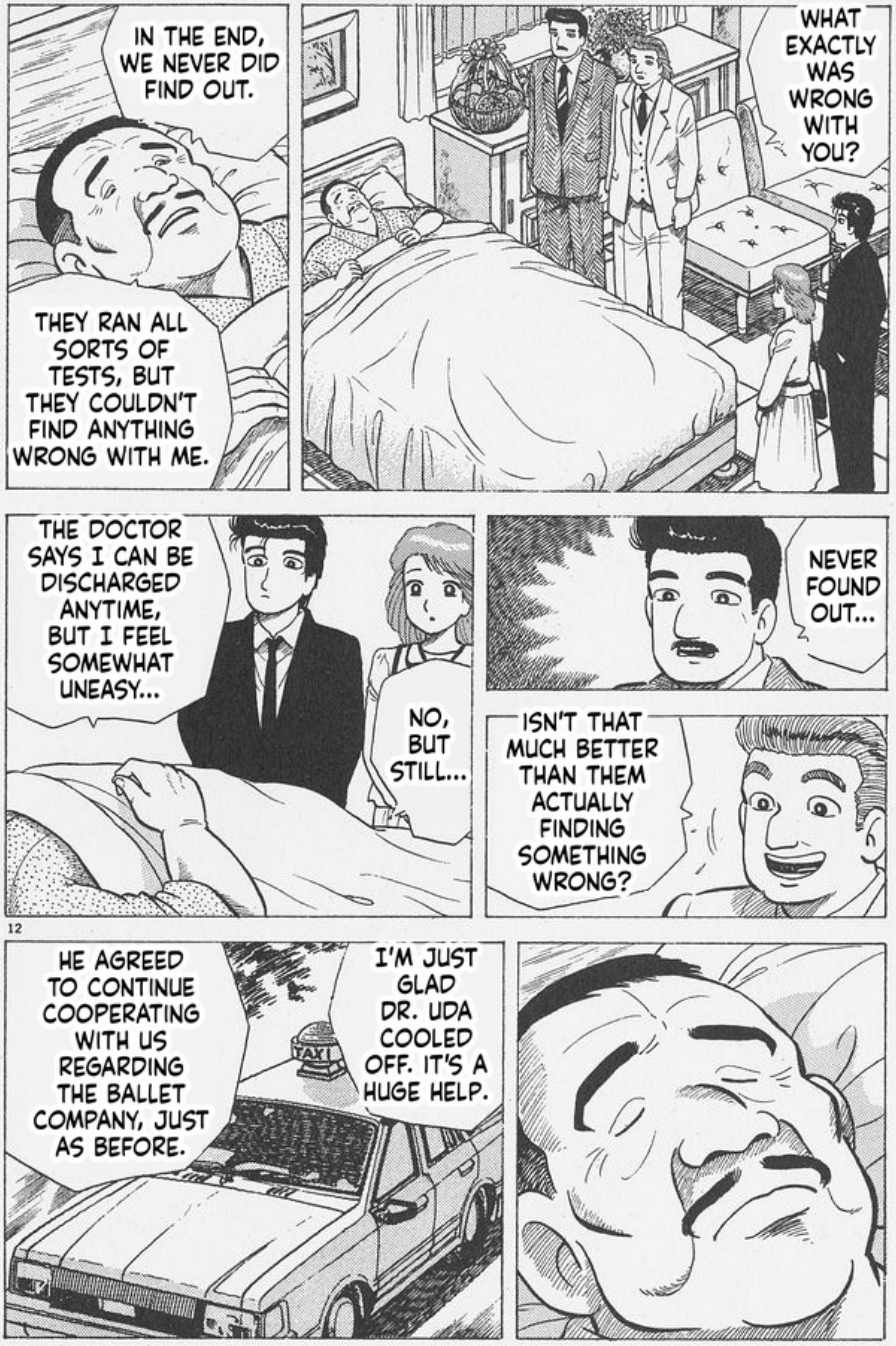
AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO THE COOPERATION OF MR. UDA, WHO IS PERSONALLY CLOSE WITH THE FRENCH MINISTER OF CULTURE.
BUT NOW MR. UDA SAYS HE CAN NO LONGER COOPERATE!
YAMAOKA! KURITA! HOW DID THIS HAPPEN WHEN THE TWO OF YOU WERE RIGHT THERE?!

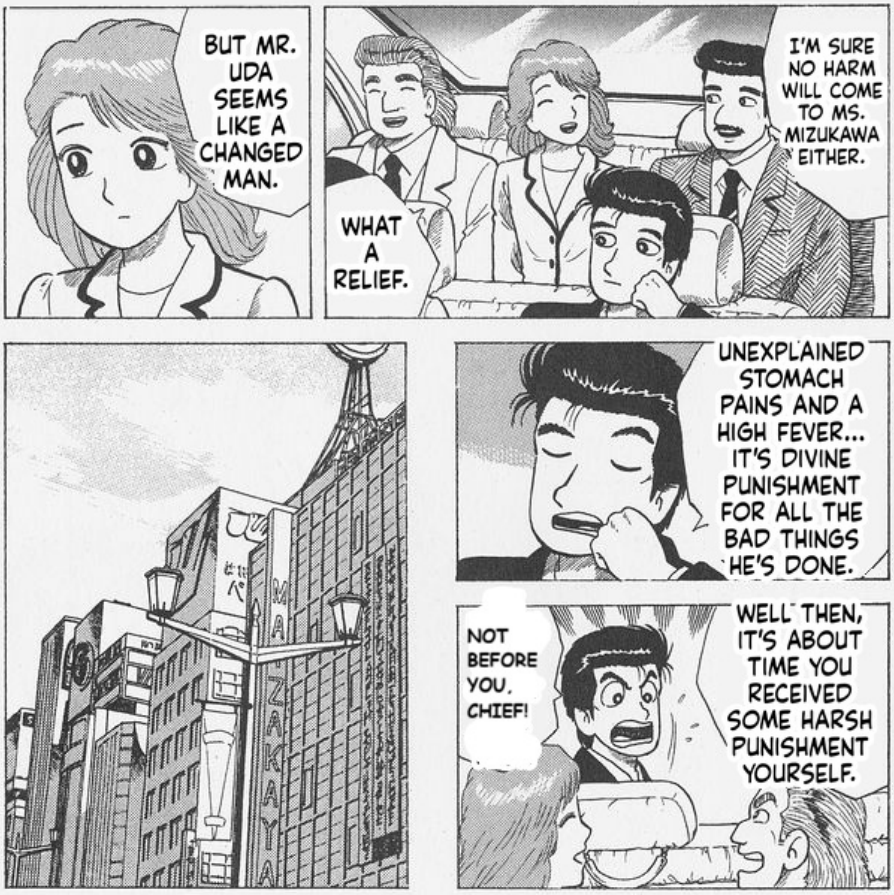
POUT
I'M NOT GOING TO GROVEL!
HOW AWFUL!
IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT, THEN PUT IN THE EFFORT. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME TO APOLOGIZE TO MR. UDA.
THIS IS KOIZUMI FROM TOZAI NEWS, IS THE MASTER...

11

WHAT DID YOU SAY?! HE'S BEEN HOSPITALIZED!

HE SUDDENLY STARTED FEELING UNWELL...
A TERRIBLE HIGH FEVER BROKE OUT... AND THEN THE STOMACH PAINS LASTED FOR THREE WHOLE DAYS...
303
宇田 吉夫
出水第一病院


IN THE END, WE NEVER DID FIND OUT.
THEY RAN ALL SORTS OF TESTS, BUT THEY COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH ME.
WHAT EXACTLY WAS WRONG WITH YOU?
THE DOCTOR SAYS I CAN BE DISCHARGED ANYTIME, BUT I FEEL SOMEWHAT UNEASY...
NO, BUT STILL...
NEVER FOUND OUT...
ISN'T THAT MUCH BETTER THAN THEM ACTUALLY FINDING SOMETHING WRONG?
12
HE AGREED TO CONTINUE COOPERATING WITH US REGARDING THE BALLET COMPANY, JUST AS BEFORE.
I'M JUST GLAD DR. UDA COOLED OFF. IT'S A HUGE HELP.
TAXI


BUT MR. UDA SEEMS LIKE A CHANGED MAN.
I'M SURE NO HARM WILL COME TO MS. MIZUKAWA EITHER.
WHAT A RELIEF.
UNEXPLAINED STOMACH PAINS AND A HIGH FEVER... IT'S DIVINE PUNISHMENT FOR ALL THE BAD THINGS HE'S DONE.
NOT BEFORE YOU, CHIEF!
WELL THEN, IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU RECEIVED SOME HARSH PUNISHMENT YOURSELF.
13
HAVE YOU FULLY RECOVERED NOW?
WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE UP AND ABOUT.
OH, YOU'RE FROM THE TOZAI NEWS.
OH, MR. UDA.

I EVEN FIND MYSELF WONDERING WHY I EVER THOUGHT THIS STUFF TASTED GOOD IN THE FIRST PLACE...
NOTHING I EAT TASTES GOOD.
ESPECIALLY THE VEGETABLES...
THERE'S NOTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH ME, BUT I JUST HAVE NO APPETITE.
YOUR APPETITE STILL HASN'T COME BACK?
I USED TO LOVE CELERY AND SPINACH SALADS ESPECIALLY, BUT NOW...
IN THE PAST, WHEN I WAS TIRED, RAW VEGETABLES TASTED DELICIOUS. I'D EAT ENOUGH TO FEED A HORSE... BUT NOW, THEY DON'T TASTE GOOD AT ALL.
I SEE...
14
TO THINK A MAN WHO USED TO BE SO ARROGANT HAS BECOME SO MILD-MANNERED, IT'S LIKE A DREAM...
WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING FOR HIM.
I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM...
I FEEL LIKE I'VE LOST ONE OF THE GREAT JOYS OF LIVING...

REALLY?!
Y'KNOW, LISTENING TO WHAT HE JUST SAID, SOMETHING'S OCCURRED TO ME...
YEAH...

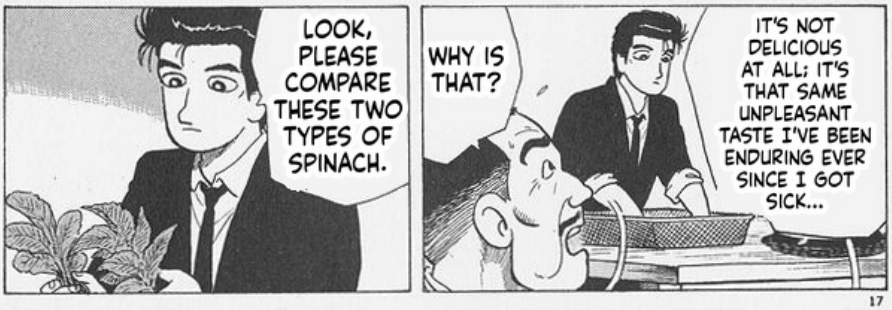
15

I AM VERY SORRY FOR HOW I ACTED BACK THEN.

I ALSO REALIZE THAT I SHOULD'VE EXPLAINED MY VIEWS MORE PATIENTLY TO YOU...

NOW THAT YOU'VE MADE UP, LET'S HAVE OUR MEAL.
I WAS WORRIED THAT I HAD BEEN QUITE RUDE TO HIM.
MY, THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE CHANCE TO MEET THIS PERSON AGAIN.
I USED TO LOVE IT, BUT...
SIGH... SPINACH SALAD, HUH...
IT'S TOPPED WITH A SPECIAL DRESSING MADE FROM WALNUT OIL AND KABOSU JUICE.
FIRST, PLEASE HAVE THE SPINACH SALAD.
16
IT TASTES EVEN BETTER THAN IT DID BEFORE I GOT SICK!
OH, OH! THIS IS IT! THE TASTE OF MY FAVORITE SPINACH HAS RETURNED!
THIS IS!
EH!

WHAT IS THIS?
WH...
WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER PLATE?
I'M GRATEFUL! I WAS JUST HOPING FOR SECONDS!


LOOK, PLEASE COMPARE THESE TWO TYPES OF SPINACH.
WHY IS THAT?
IT'S NOT DELICIOUS AT ALL; IT'S THAT SAME UNPLEASANT TASTE I'VE BEEN ENDURING EVER SINCE I GOT SICK...

THIS IS THE WESTERN VARIETY THAT HAS BECOME MAINSTREAM RECENTLY.
THE LEAVES ARE ROUNDED WITH FEW LOBES, THE STEMS ARE THICK, AND THE ROOTS AREN'T VERY RED.
THIS IS THE NATIVE VARIETY OF SPINACH THAT HAS BEEN IN JAPAN SINCE ANCIENT TIMES.
THE LEAVES ARE LONG AND POINTED, THE LOBES ARE DEEP AND SHARP, THE STEMS ARE THIN, AND THE ROOTS ARE BRIGHT RED.

HOWEVER, THE NATIVE VARIETY IS AT ITS BEST IN WINTER; YOU CAN TRY GROWING IT IN SUMMER, BUT IT BOLTS EASILY.
THE NATIVE VARIETY HAS LESS BITTERNESS AND A CRISPER TEXTURE; IT'S MUCH TASTIER TO EAT.
NATIVE VARIETIES AND WESTERN VARIETIES!
NEXT, PLEASE TRY A CELERY STICK.
IN THAT REGARD, WESTERN VARIETIES CAN BE GROWN YEAR-ROUND AND HAVE HIGHER YIELDS.
SO EVERYONE SWITCHED OVER FROM THE NATIVE VARIETIES TO THE WESTERN ONES.
SO, THE SPINACH I USED TO EAT AND THE SPINACH NOWADAYS ARE DIFFERENT...
18
THE JUICES OVERFLOWING IN MY MOUTH! THIS RICH FLAVOR!
WOW! THIS VIVID AROMA! THIS CRUNCHY TEXTURE!
シャク
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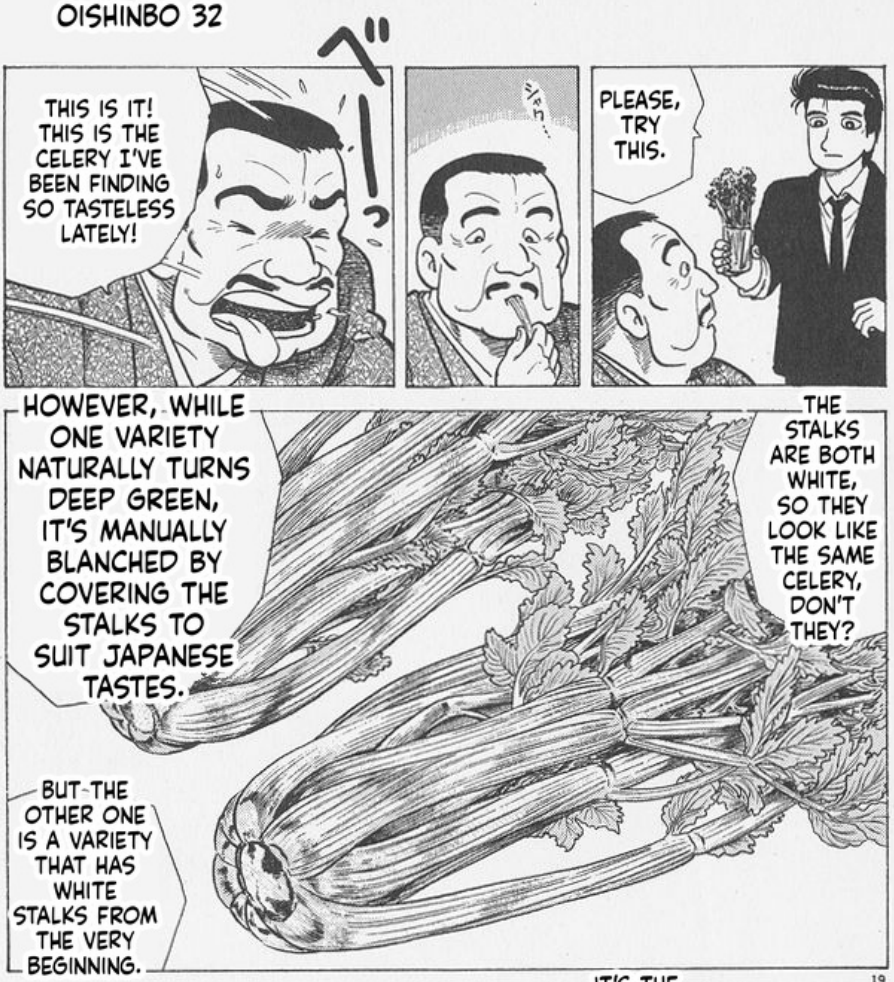
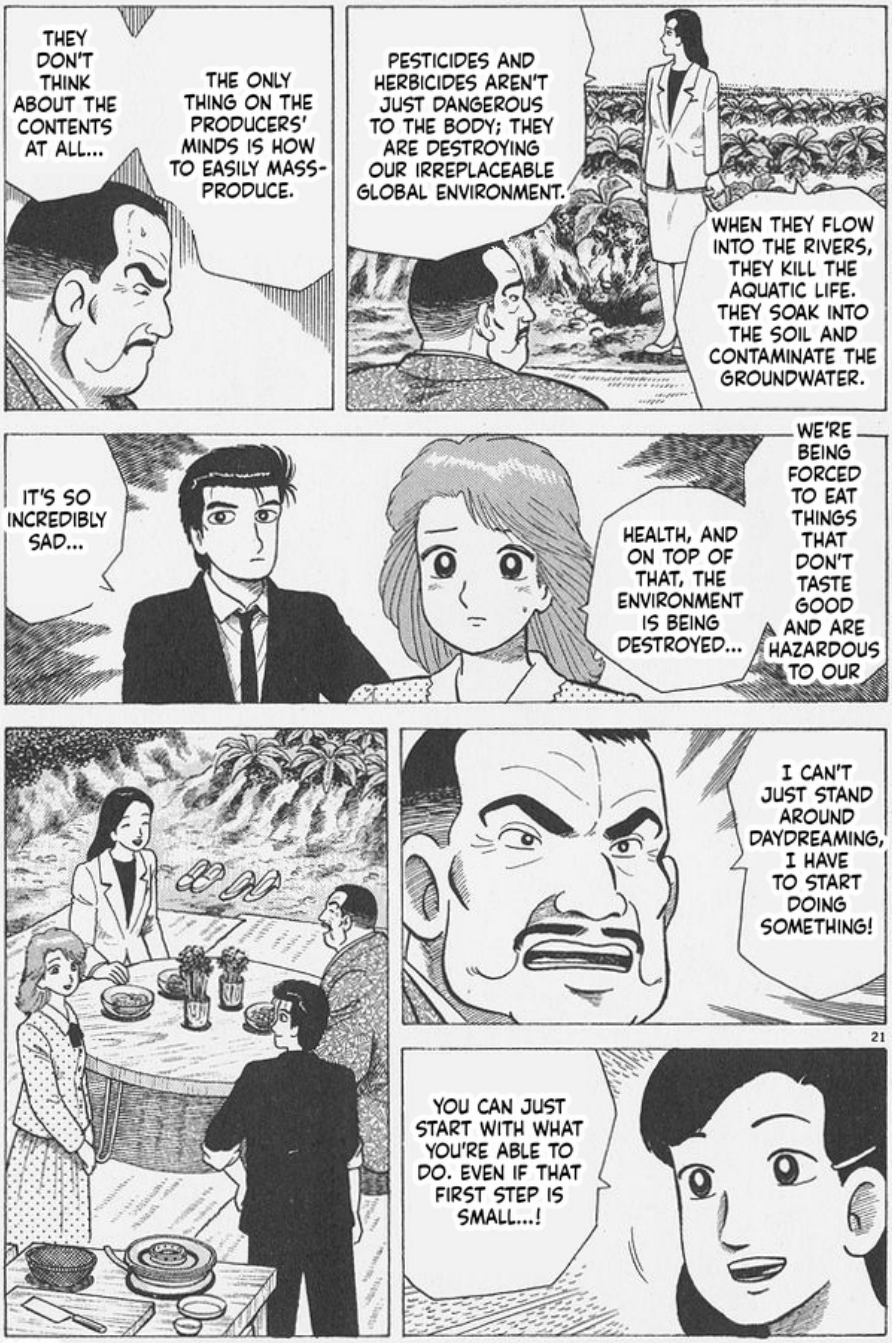
!
THINGS I USED TO LOVE, BUT CAN'T FIND DELICIOUS AT ALL ANYMORE...
NO... THIS CELERY IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE

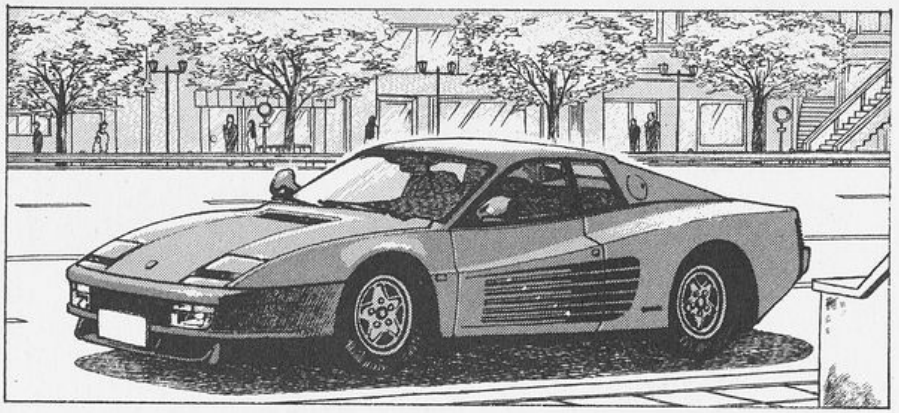

ベリ!?
THIS IS IT! THIS IS THE CELERY I'VE BEEN FINDING SO TASTELESS LATELY!
Hah...
PLEASE, TRY THIS.
HOWEVER, WHILE ONE VARIETY NATURALLY TURNS DEEP GREEN, IT'S MANUALLY BLANCHED BY COVERING THE STALKS TO SUIT JAPANESE TASTES.
THE STALKS ARE BOTH WHITE, SO THEY LOOK LIKE THE SAME CELERY, DON'T THEY?
BUT THE OTHER ONE IS A VARIETY THAT HAS WHITE STALKS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
19
HMM... SO EVEN THE TYPES OF CELERY HAVE CHANGED!
BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE DIFFICULT TO GROW, THE VARIETY WITH NATURALLY WHITE STALKS—WHICH IS MUCH EASIER TO CULTIVATE—BECAME THE STANDARD.
IT'S THE SAME VARIETY AS OVERSEAS CELERY; THE AROMA IS SHARP AND THE FLAVOR IS INTENSE.
IN THE OLD DAYS, WE USED THE SEEDS THAT TURN GREEN IF LEFT ALONE.

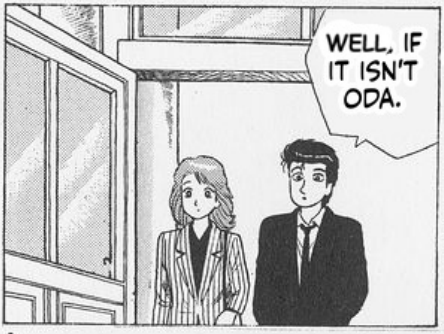
GOOD GRIEF...
THE FLAVOR DECLINES ALONG WITH THE DANGER OF RESIDUAL PESTICIDES.
THAT'S NOT ALL. CELERY IS VULNERABLE TO PESTS AND DISEASES, SO THEY USE PLENTY OF PESTICIDES TO REDUCE THE LABOR REQUIRED.
IT SEEMS THAT ILLNESS ACTUALLY PURIFIED ME.
SPINACH AND CELERY ARE DIFFERENT VARIETIES NOW, AND SINCE THEY USE PLENTY OF PESTICIDES THAT WEREN'T USED IN THE PAST, THE FLAVOR IS BOUND TO CHANGE.
THAT'S WHY MY OLD, PURE SENSES HAVE BEEN REVIVED...
THE WESTERN VARIETY USED PESTICIDES.
THAT SPINACH FROM EARLIER— THE HEIRLOOM VARIETY WAS GROWN WITHOUT PESTICIDES.
THE SOIL IS SOFT AND RICH, AND ALL THE MICROORGANISMS ARE ALIVE.
SINCE WE FARM AROUND HERE WITHOUT ANY PESTICIDES OR HERBICIDES,
20
IF YOU USE PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES, ALL THE LIVING THINGS IN THE FIELDS WILL DIE.


THEY DON'T THINK ABOUT THE CONTENTS AT ALL...
THE ONLY THING ON THE PRODUCERS' MINDS IS HOW TO EASILY MASS-PRODUCE.
PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES AREN'T JUST DANGEROUS TO THE BODY; THEY ARE DESTROYING OUR IRREPLACEABLE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT.
WHEN THEY FLOW INTO THE RIVERS, THEY KILL THE AQUATIC LIFE. THEY SOAK INTO THE SOIL AND CONTAMINATE THE GROUNDWATER.
IT'S SO INCREDIBLY SAD...
HEALTH, AND ON TOP OF THAT, THE ENVIRONMENT IS BEING DESTROYED...
WE'RE BEING FORCED TO EAT THINGS THAT DON'T TASTE GOOD AND ARE HAZARDOUS TO OUR
I CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND DAYDREAMING, I HAVE TO START DOING SOMETHING!
21
YOU CAN JUST START WITH WHAT YOU'RE ABLE TO DO. EVEN IF THAT FIRST STEP IS SMALL...!

I'M GONNA DIE!!!
STOMACHACHE...
CALL A DOCTOR, PLEASE!
OW OW OW OW...
東日新聞社
HE MIGHT SUDDENLY BECOME A HARD WORKER.
ケケケ
WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN WITH HIM?
I HEARD MR. UDA BECAME A BETTER PERSON AFTER HE GOT THAT STOMACHACHE.
22
THEN GO AHEAD AND ACTUALLY DIE!
ボカ
ボカ
ボカ
ボカ
CUT IT OUT ALREADY!
WAAAAH! HELP ME!
HE JUST ATE TOO MUCH LUNCH, THAT'S ALL.
IT'S NOT SERIOUS.
ドドドドドドドド

第6話
新・豆腐勝負
〈前編〉




WELL, IF IT ISN'T ODA.

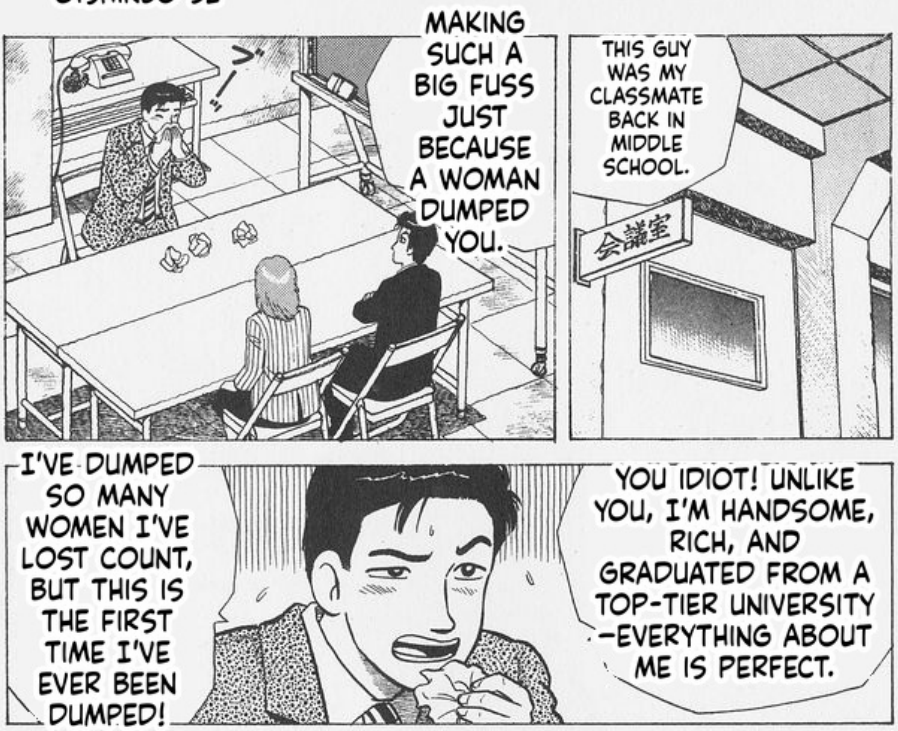
YAMAOKA!

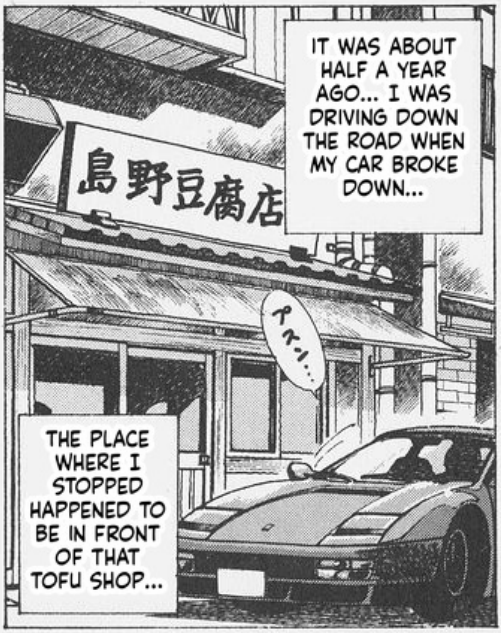
2

I, SATORU ODA, HAVE BEEN DUMPED BY A WOMAN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE–

PARKING THAT FLASHY CAR IN FRONT OF THE OFFICE, THAT'S YOURS, ISN'T IT?
YAMAOKA... I... I...

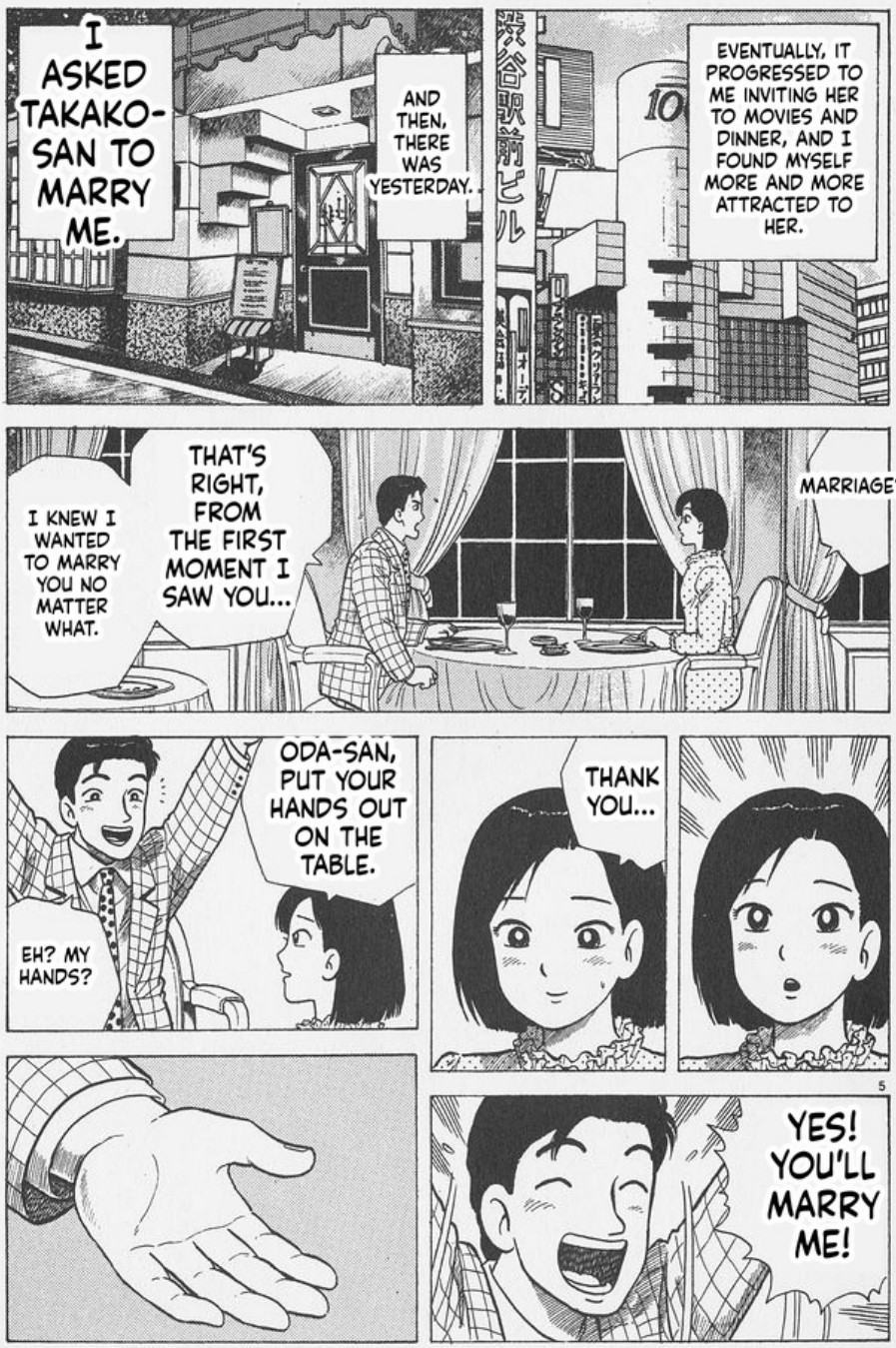
EH?


MAKING SUCH A BIG FUSS JUST BECAUSE A WOMAN DUMPED YOU.
THIS GUY WAS MY CLASSMATE BACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
会議室
I'VE DUMPED SO MANY WOMEN I'VE LOST COUNT, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN DUMPED!
YOU IDIOT! UNLIKE YOU, I'M HANDSOME, RICH, AND GRADUATED FROM A TOP-TIER UNIVERSITY —EVERYTHING ABOUT ME IS PERFECT.


島野豆腐店
IT WAS ABOUT HALF A YEAR AGO... I WAS DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD WHEN MY CAR BROKE DOWN...
アイ...
THE PLACE WHERE I STOPPED HAPPENED TO BE IN FRONT OF THAT TOFU SHOP...

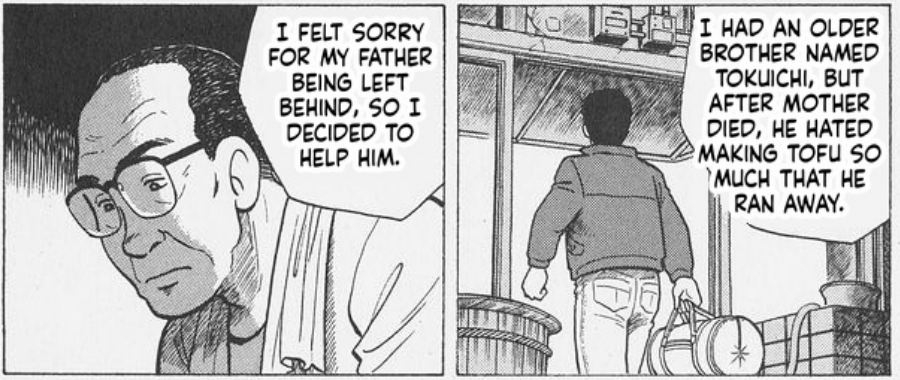
WELL, AREN'T WE FULL OF OURSELVES.
3
I'LL LISTEN, SO GO AHEAD AND TELL ME THE STORY.
TCH, WHAT AN ANNOYING GUY.

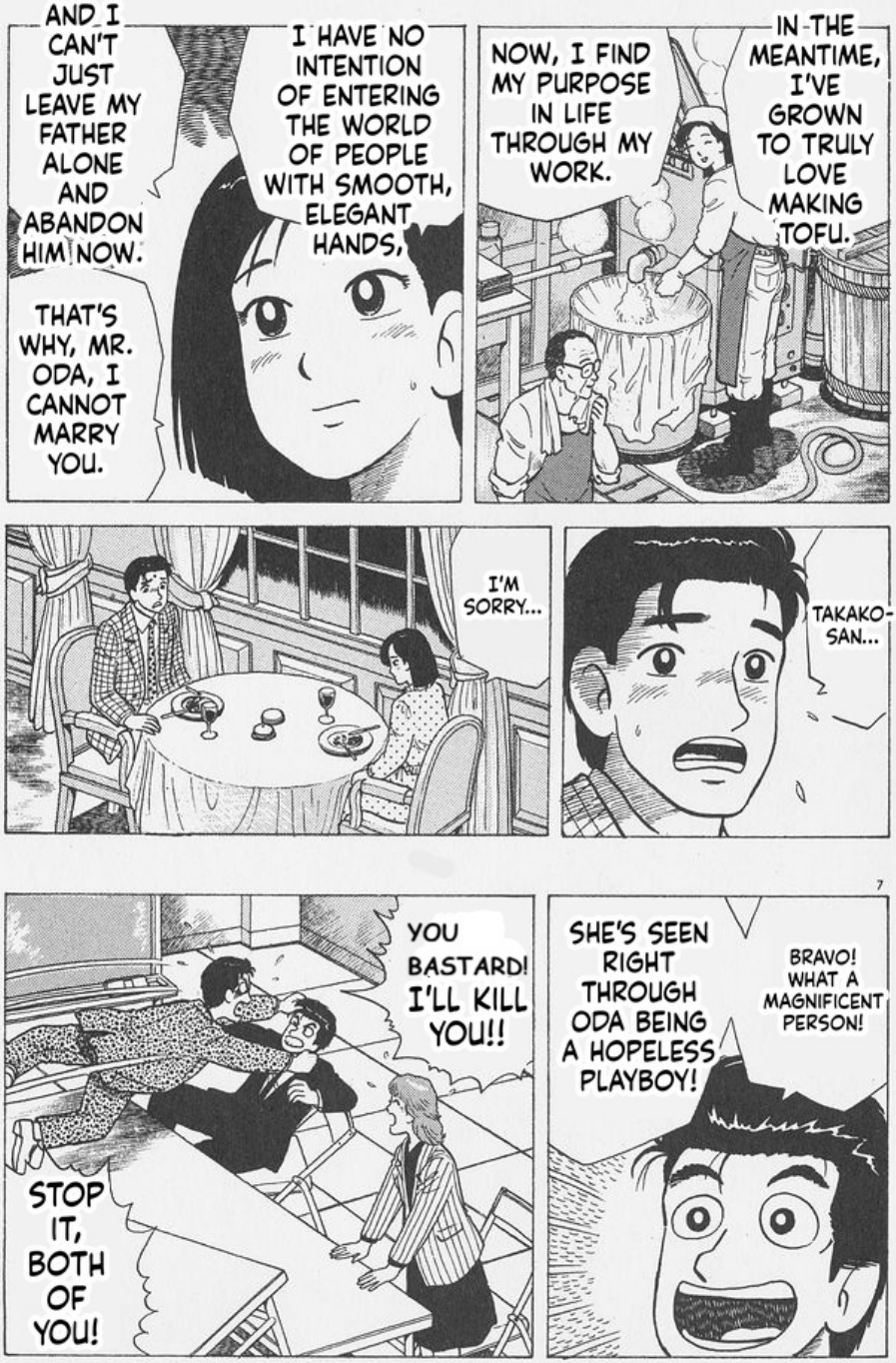
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TOFU?
EXCUSE ME.
カラ?
GEEZ... WHAT A MESS.
I'D LIKE TO CALL A TOW TRUCK. COULD I USE YOUR PHONE...?
UM, ACTUALLY, MY CAR BROKE DOWN...
THAT MUST BE A PROBLEM, PLEASE, COME IN.
!!
UM, IS SOMETHING...?
4
IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT... AND FROM THEN ON, I WENT TO BUY TOFU EVERY SINGLE DAY.
HER NAME WAS TAKAKO SHIMANO.


I ASKED TAKAKO-SAN TO MARRY ME.
AND THEN, THERE WAS YESTERDAY.
EVENTUALLY, IT PROGRESSED TO ME INVITING HER TO MOVIES AND DINNER, AND I FOUND MYSELF MORE AND MORE ATTRACTED TO HER.
I KNEW I WANTED TO MARRY YOU NO MATTER WHAT.
THAT'S RIGHT, FROM THE FIRST MOMENT I SAW YOU...
MARRIAGE?
ODA-SAN, PUT YOUR HANDS OUT ON THE TABLE.
EH? MY HANDS?
THANK YOU...
5
YES! YOU'LL MARRY ME!

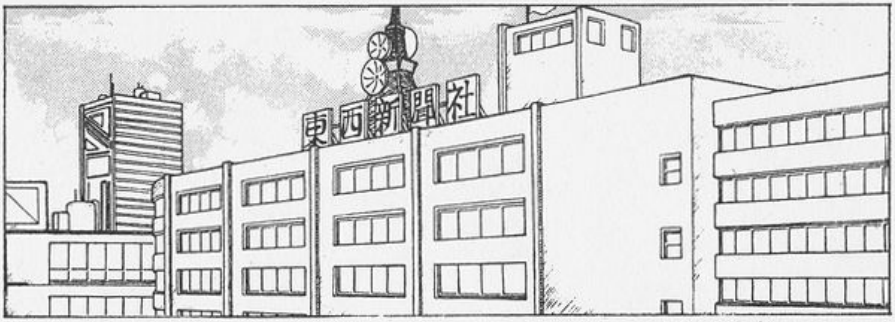
COMPARED TO YOURS, MY HANDS HAVE THICK FINGERS AND ARE COVERED IN CRACKS AND CHAPS...
YOUR FINGERS ARE SO SLENDER, ODA-SAN, AND YOUR SKIN IS SMOOTH AND BEAUTIFUL.
...LOOK, THESE ARE MY HANDS.
BUT ODA-SAN, THIS IS REALITY. WE LIVE IN TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS.
I'M NOT ASHAMED OF MY HANDS. I CONSIDER THEM A TOFU MAKER'S BADGE OF HONOR.
TAKAKO-SAN, THAT'S...
AND SINCE I'M ALWAYS WORKING WITH WATER, THE CRACKS AND CHAPS NEVER GO AWAY.
MAKING TOFU IS GRUELING WORK FOR A WOMAN.
THAT'S WHY MY HANDS ENDED UP LIKE THIS.

6


I FELT SORRY FOR MY FATHER BEING LEFT BEHIND, SO I DECIDED TO HELP HIM.
I HAD AN OLDER BROTHER NAMED TOKUICHI, BUT AFTER MOTHER DIED, HE HATED MAKING TOFU SO MUCH THAT HE RAN AWAY.


AND I CAN'T JUST LEAVE MY FATHER ALONE AND ABANDON HIM NOW.
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF ENTERING THE WORLD OF PEOPLE WITH SMOOTH, ELEGANT HANDS,
THAT'S WHY, MR. ODA, I CANNOT MARRY YOU.
NOW, I FIND MY PURPOSE IN LIFE THROUGH MY WORK.
IN THE MEANTIME, I'VE GROWN TO TRULY LOVE MAKING TOFU.
I'M SORRY...
TAKAKO-SAN...
YOU BASTARD! I'LL KILL YOU!!
STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU!
SHE'S SEEN RIGHT THROUGH ODA BEING A HOPELESS PLAYBOY!
BRAVO! WHAT A MAGNIFICENT PERSON!

IF THAT BROTHER CAME BACK AND TOOK OVER YOUR FATHER'S BUSINESS, WOULDN'T THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO MARRY TAKAKO-SAN?
TAKAKO-SAN HAS AN OLDER BROTHER, DOESN'T SHE?
ODA-SAN, INSTEAD OF SOBBING, WHY DON'T YOU LOOK FOR A POSSIBILITY?
A POSSIBILITY?
MONEY AT PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS OR THE POLICE, YOU'LL FIND HIS WHEREABOUTS IN NO TIME.
YOUR FAMILY HAS BEEN CRIMINALLY WEALTHY FOR GENERATIONS. IF YOU THROW ENOUGH
B-BUT, HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND HIM...?
8
SEE YA, YAMAOKA. THANKS, KURITA-SAN.
GOOD LUCK.
ALRIGHT, I'LL DO IT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'CRIMINAL'?!


東西新聞社

HEY, WHAT'S WITH ALL THE NOISE IN MY SACRED WORKPLACE?
OH, HELLO, ODA-SAN.

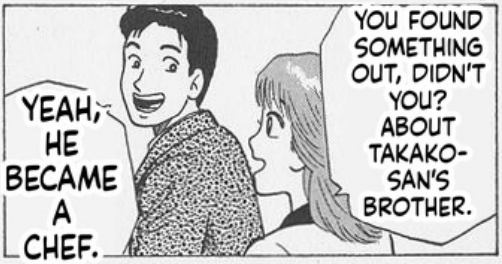
ZZZ...

HEY, YAMAOKA!
YAMAOKA!

SO, WHERE IS HE?
MY, A CHEF.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YAMAOKA JUST SAID THAT! THERE'S GONNA BE A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE!
ガク
SACRED WORKPLACE!

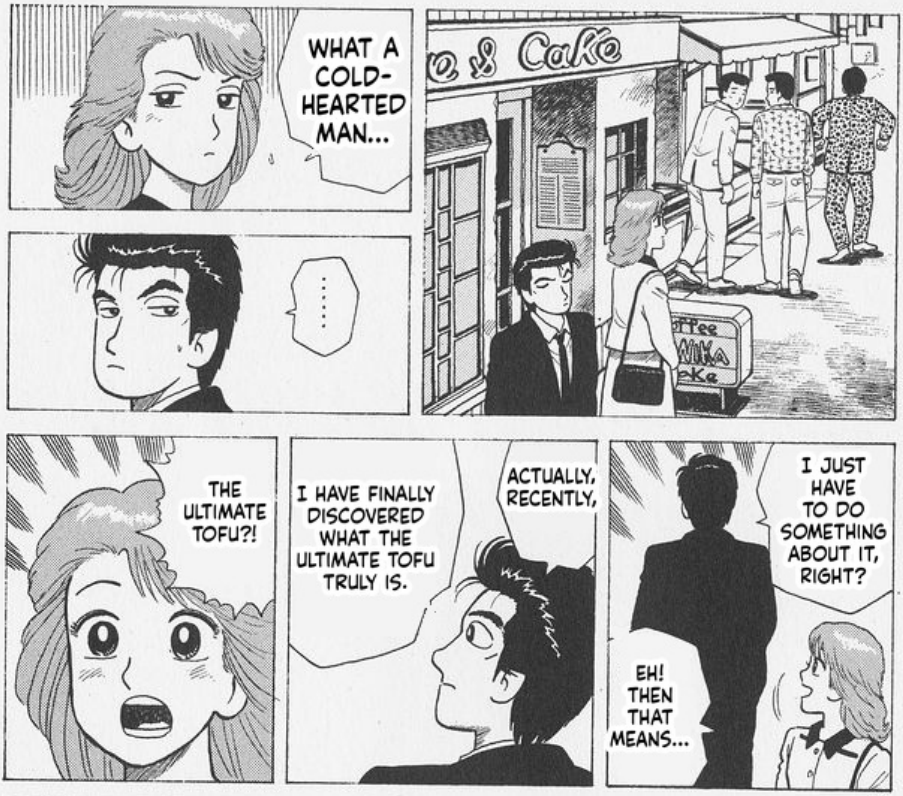
WHERE IS HE?
WELL, THE THING IS...


YEAH, HE BECAME A CHEF.
YOU FOUND SOMETHING OUT, DIDN'T YOU? ABOUT TAKAKO-SAN'S BROTHER.

AT THE GOURMET CLUB!
WHAT?!
HE'S WORKING IN THE KITCHEN OF KAIBARA YUZAN'S GOURMET CLUB.
THE GOURMET CLUB.
I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT TAKAKO WAS SAYING...
OH MY... IT LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET A BIT TURBULENT...
Coffee & Cake
10
THAT'S PART OF IT. MY FATHER IS STUBBORN, AND I'M STUBBORN, SO WE CLASHED AND I LEFT HOME.
BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEM WITH YOUR DAD?
I JUST CAN'T DO IT...
WHEN I THINK OF MY SISTER, I WANT TO GO HOME MORE THAN ANYTHING, BUT...

I AM DEEPLY INDEBTED TO MASTER KAIBARA.
BUT THE EVEN BIGGER REASON IS MASTER KAIBARA HIMSELF.
I PRESSED A KNIFE AGAINST MY STOMACH
AND TOLD HIM THAT IF HE DIDN'T HIRE ME, I WOULD DISEMBOWEL MYSELF
SO ONE DAY, I WAITED AT THE GATE FOR MASTER KAIBARA TO HEAD OUT...
I BELIEVED THAT IF I WERE TO TRAIN AS A CHEF, THE GOURMET CLUB WAS THE ONLY PLACE,
GOURMET CLUB
11
SO TOKUICHI-SAN'S PASSION REALLY GOT THROUGH TO HIM.
IN AN EXCEPTIONAL MOVE, HE ALLOWED HIM TO WORK HERE.
MASTER KAIBARA ISN'T THE TYPE TO BE FAZED BY SUCH THINGS, BUT HE MUST HAVE SENSED SOMETHING IN TOKUICHI.
WHOA, THAT'S INTENSE.

YOU SHOULD JUST KICK DUST IN YUZAN'S FACE AND TELL HIM YOU'RE DONE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THIS IS RIDICULOUS.
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO ASK FOR MY RELEASE.
IF MR. KAIBARA HADN'T TAKEN ME IN BACK THEN, I MIGHT HAVE GONE ASTRAY BY NOW.
EVEN IF IT IS FOR MY SISTER'S SAKE...
PLEASE ASK HIM TO LET TOKUICHI-SAN GO.
BUT JUST THIS ONCE, FOR MY SAKE, WON'T YOU SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE AND ASK HIM?
NO WAY IN HELL.
YAMAOKA... I'M WELL AWARE OF THE HISTORY BETWEEN YOU AND YUZAN KAIBARA.
12
I'D RATHER BE KICKED TO DEATH BY A HORSE THAN BOW MY HEAD TO A GUY LIKE THAT!
NO MATTER HOW CLOSE WE ARE, THERE ARE THINGS I CAN DO AND THINGS I CAN'T!
YAMAOKA-SAN, PLEASE DO SOMETHING FOR THEM.
I'M BEGGING YOU, IT'S THE FAVOR OF A LIFETIME!
YAMAOKA, PLEASE!


WHAT A COLD-HEARTED MAN...
.....
Cake
THE ULTIMATE TOFU?!
I HAVE FINALLY DISCOVERED WHAT THE ULTIMATE TOFU TRULY IS.
ACTUALLY, RECENTLY,
I JUST HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, RIGHT?
EH! THEN THAT MEANS...
13
にやり
IT'S A TOFU BATTLE THAT WILL ALSO HELP SOMEONE IN NEED!
I'VE PERFECTED THE ULTIMATE TOFU.
IT'S NEITHER THE HAND-SCOOPED TOFU NOR THE BASKET-STRAINED TOFU THAT BOTH SIDES PRESENTED IN THE PREVIOUS 'SUPREME MENU' BATTLE.
I WANT TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TEST IT OUT.

RIGHT, THEN AT OKABOSHI AT 7:00.
WELL, SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WHEN YOU'RE SO BUSY.
I SEE, ARE YOU FREE TONIGHT?
HEY THERE, PRESIDENT DAN.
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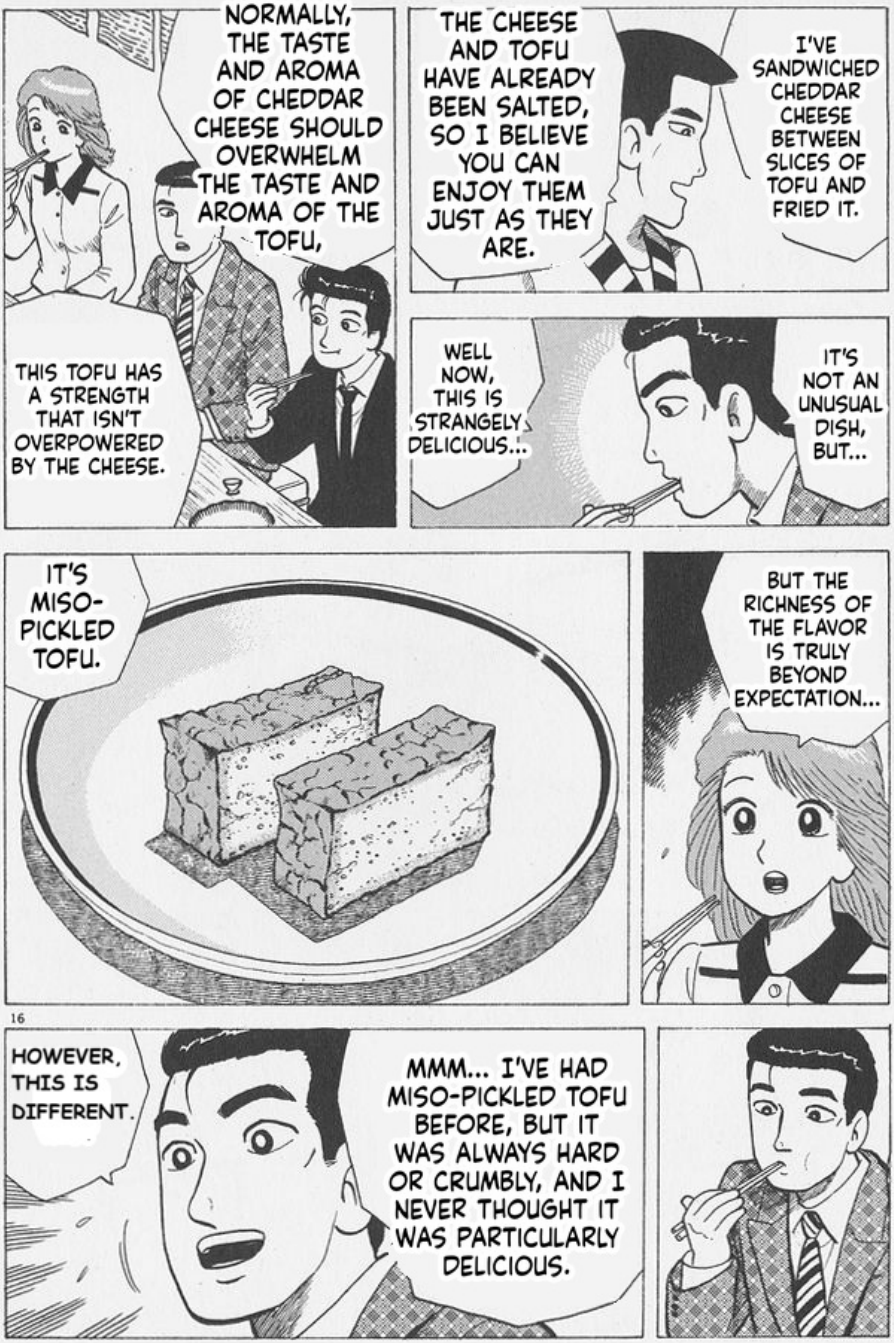
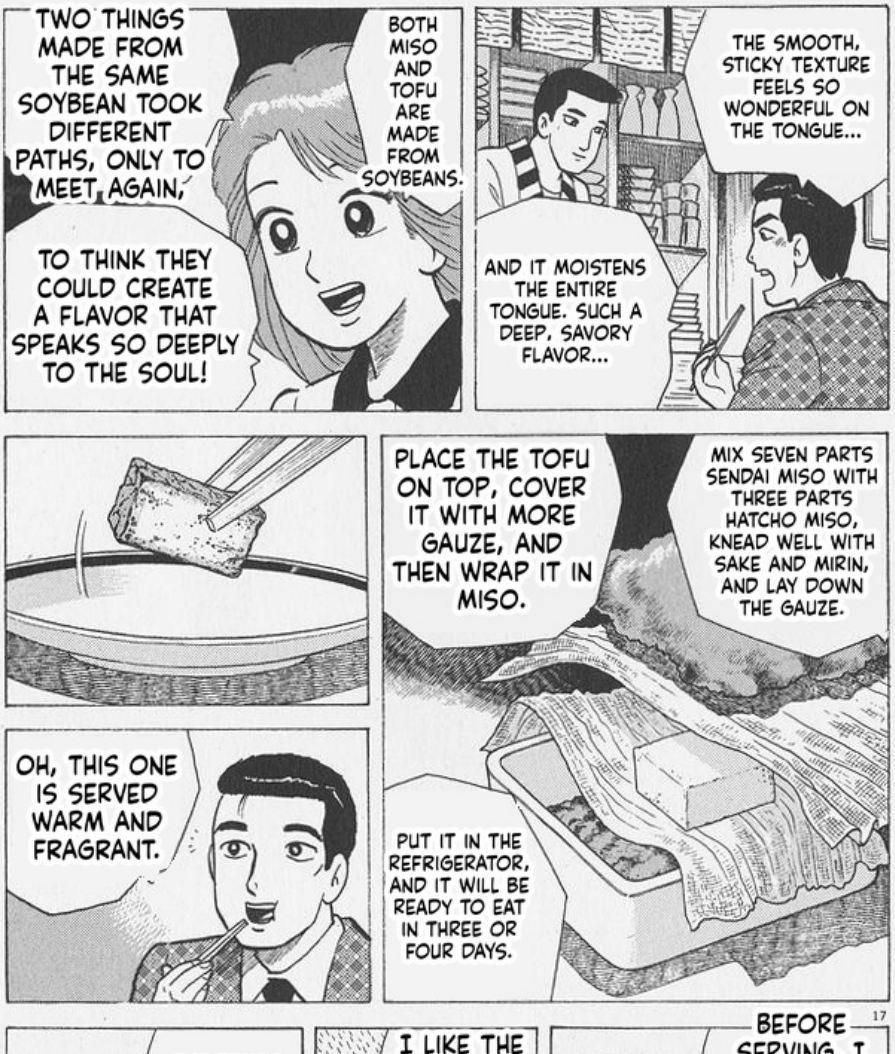
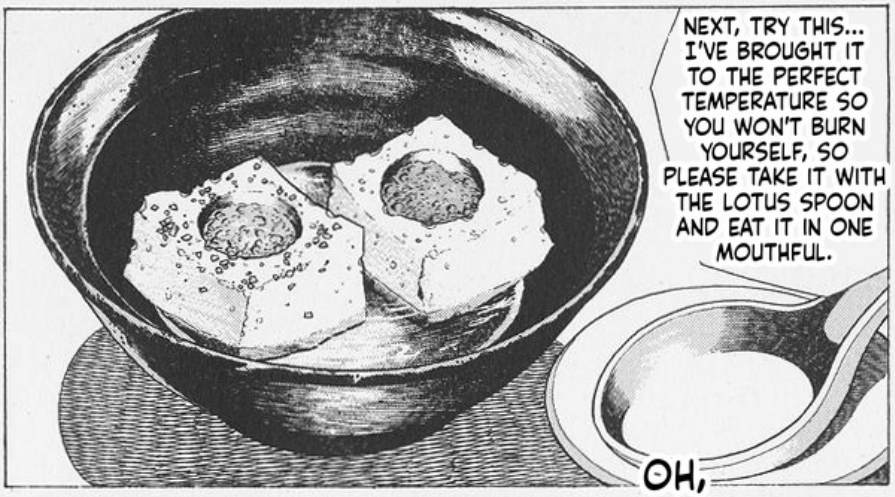
I'M HAVING DINNER WITH PRESIDENT DAN.
KEEP TONIGHT OPEN FOR ME.
YAMAOKA-SAN AND PRESIDENT DAN...?
HUH? OH... YES...
14
IF YAMAOKA-SAN IS TREATING ME, I'D COME FLYING NO MATTER WHAT.
NO, NO, I'M SORRY, IT'S NOT REALLY THAT MUCH OF A FEAST.
岡屋

TRYING TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM MS. KURITA...
YOU'RE PLOTTING SOMETHING, AREN'T YOU?
HEH HEH HEH, CAN YOU TELL?
PLEASE, I HELP YOURSELF.
TIME TO EAT.
NOW THIS IS TOFU.
AND THERE'S CHEESE IN BETWEEN...


NORMALLY, THE TASTE AND AROMA OF CHEDDAR CHEESE SHOULD OVERWHELM THE TASTE AND AROMA OF THE TOFU,
THIS TOFU HAS A STRENGTH THAT ISN'T OVERPOWERED BY THE CHEESE.
THE CHEESE AND TOFU HAVE ALREADY BEEN SALTED, SO I BELIEVE YOU CAN ENJOY THEM JUST AS THEY ARE.
I'VE SANDWICHED CHEDDAR CHEESE BETWEEN SLICES OF TOFU AND FRIED IT.
WELL NOW, THIS IS STRANGELY DELICIOUS...
IT'S NOT AN UNUSUAL DISH, BUT...
IT'S MISO-PICKLED TOFU.
BUT THE RICHNESS OF THE FLAVOR IS TRULY BEYOND EXPECTATION...
HOWEVER, THIS IS DIFFERENT.
MMM... I'VE HAD MISO-PICKLED TOFU BEFORE, BUT IT WAS ALWAYS HARD OR CRUMBLY, AND I NEVER THOUGHT IT WAS PARTICULARLY DELICIOUS.

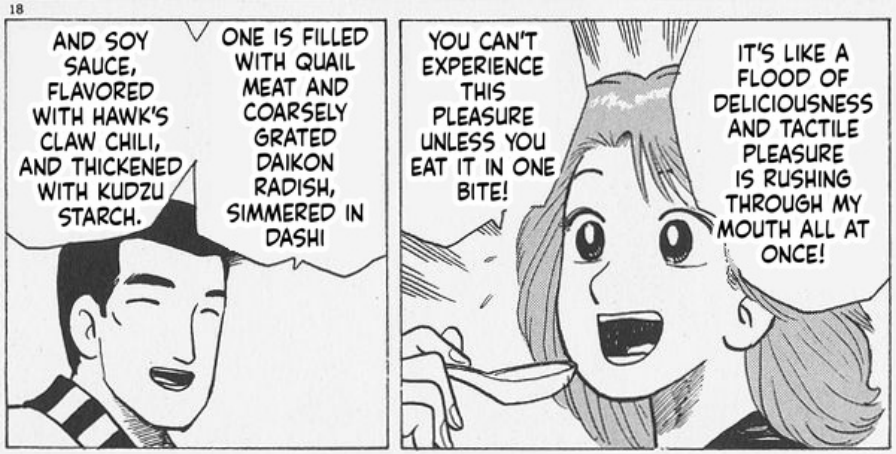
16


TWO THINGS MADE FROM THE SAME SOYBEAN TOOK DIFFERENT PATHS, ONLY TO MEET AGAIN,
BOTH MISO AND TOFU ARE MADE FROM SOYBEANS.
TO THINK THEY COULD CREATE A FLAVOR THAT SPEAKS SO DEEPLY TO THE SOUL!
THE SMOOTH, STICKY TEXTURE FEELS SO WONDERFUL ON THE TONGUE...
AND IT MOISTENS THE ENTIRE TONGUE. SUCH A DEEP, SAVORY FLAVOR...
PLACE THE TOFU ON TOP, COVER IT WITH MORE GAUZE, AND THEN WRAP IT IN MISO.
MIX SEVEN PARTS SENDAI MISO WITH THREE PARTS HATCHO MISO, KNEAD WELL WITH SAKE AND MIRIN, AND LAY DOWN THE GAUZE.
OH, THIS ONE IS SERVED WARM AND FRAGRANT.
PUT IT IN THE REFRIGERATOR, AND IT WILL BE READY TO EAT IN THREE OR FOUR DAYS.
17
BUT REALLY, THIS MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO DRINK MORE.
I LIKE THE SEARED ONE BETTER!
BEFORE SERVING, I SLICED IT THIN AND LIGHTLY SEARED IT OVER CHARCOAL.


NEXT, TRY THIS... I'VE BROUGHT IT TO THE PERFECT TEMPERATURE SO YOU WON'T BURN YOURSELF, SO PLEASE TAKE IT WITH THE LOTUS SPOON AND EAT IT IN ONE MOUTHFUL.

OH, THIS TOFU IS SOFT AGAIN.
ﾊﾑﾐ
THIS IS...!
O-OH MY!

18


AND SOY SAUCE, FLAVORED WITH HAWK'S CLAW CHILI, AND THICKENED WITH KUDZU STARCH.
ONE IS FILLED WITH QUAIL MEAT AND COARSELY GRATED DAIKON RADISH, SIMMERED IN DASHI
YOU CAN'T EXPERIENCE THIS PLEASURE UNLESS YOU EAT IT IN ONE BITE!
IT'S LIKE A FLOOD OF DELICIOUSNESS AND TACTILE PLEASURE IS RUSHING THROUGH MY MOUTH ALL AT ONCE!

PLACE IT OVER THE HEAT SO THE WHOLE THING WARMS THROUGH IN THE SHALLOW DASHI BROTH, AND IT'S DONE.
THE VARIOUS INGREDIENTS ARE PLACED INSIDE THE TOFU,
SIMMERED IN DASHI, AND THICKENED WITH KUZU STARCH.
THE OTHER ONE CONTAINS SHRIMP MEAT MINCED INTO A COARSE PASTE, FLAVORED WITH GROUND DAITOKUJI NATTO,
AND I'VE ADDED FRAGRANCE WITH CHOPPED SERI LEAVES.
THE SOFTNESS OF THIS TOFU IS EXTRAORDINARY.
IT'S NOTHING LIKE ORDINARY SILKEN TOFU.
WHILE FIRMLY SUPPORTING THE WILD FLAVOR OF THE QUAIL AND THE SWEETNESS AND SLIGHT BITTERNESS OF THE DAIKON...
I'M AMAZED...
IT WOULD BE LIKE LISTENING TO MUSIC ON A STEREO WITH ONE BROKEN CHANNEL.
THE SWEETNESS OF THE SHRIMP, THE ASTRINGENCY OF THE DAITOKUJI NATTO... BUT WITHOUT THE CALM YET POWERFUL FLAVOR OF THIS TOFU,
19

I WANT TO GET REVENGE FOR LOSING TO THE 'SUPREME MENU' IN THAT RECENT HOT POT SHOWDOWN.
YAMAOKA-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU PLOTTING? OUT WITH IT!
I REMEMBER. THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE WON THAT TIME.
WE ONCE HAD A 'ULTIMATE' VERSUS 'SUPREME' CONFRONTATION USING TOFU AS THE THEME.
EH?
20
HMM... IF YOU WANT TO GET EVEN FOR LOSING THAT HOT POT BATTLE, YOU MUST BE QUITE CONFIDENT...
THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR DISHES THAT USED TOFU AS AN INGREDIENT, LIKE THE ONES SERVED TODAY... I JUST CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THAT.
BUT BACK THEN, THE BATTLE WAS OVER THE VERY ORIGINS OF TOFU —KUMIDASHI VERSUS ZARU TOFU.
THAT'S WHY THIS TIME, I WANT TO COMPETE WITH DISHES THAT USE TOFU AS A PRIMARY INGREDIENT, LIKE THESE.

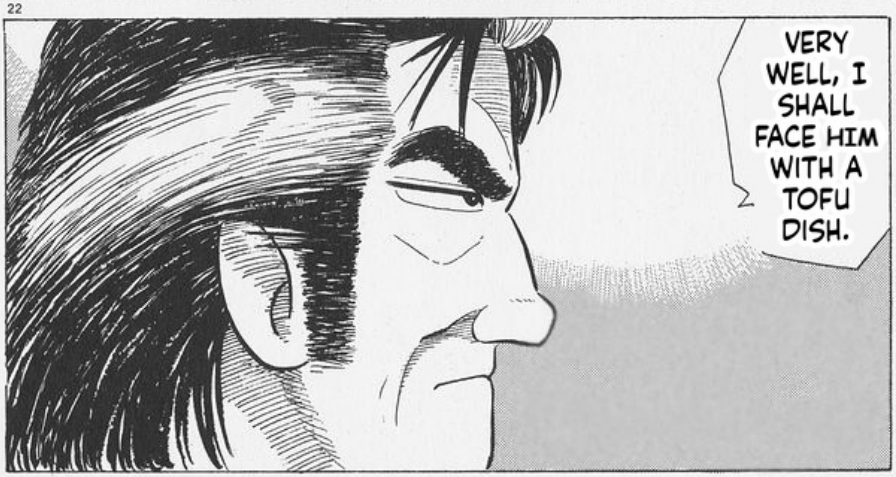
THERE'S DEFINITELY SOME SECRET TO THIS TOFU!
I SEE! EVERY SINGLE TOFU DISH TODAY IS UNBELIEVABLY DELICIOUS!
SO THE TOFU YOU USED TODAY WAS THAT 'ULTIMATE TOFU' YOU MENTIONED THE OTHER DAY!
WHAT, THE ULTIMATE TOFU?!
YOU'RE AS SHARP AS EVER. I HAVE FINALLY PERFECTED THE ULTIMATE TOFU.
I SIMPLY MUST KNOW THE SECRET...!
UGH...
21
TELL HIM TO HAVE ANOTHER 'ULTIMATE MENU' VS. 'SUPREME MENU' SHOWDOWN, USING TOFU AS THE THEME AGAIN...
DAN-SAN, I WANT YOU TO PROVOKE KAIBARA YUZAN.

美食倶楽部

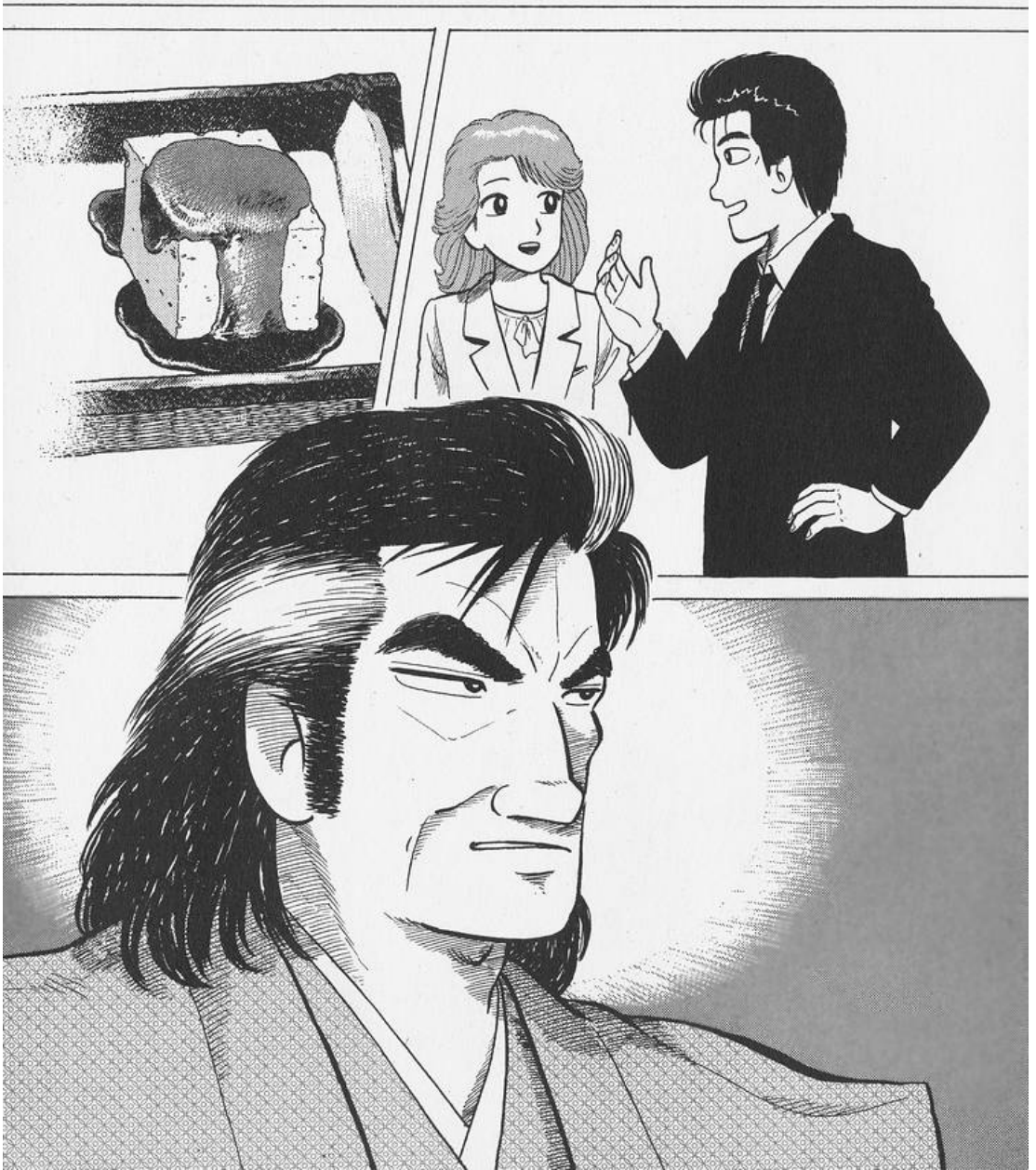
IS THAT SO?
HEH...

IT WAS AN UNBELIEVABLE TASTE.
THAT ULTIMATE TOFU... ITS DELICIOUSNESS IS EXTRAORDINARY.

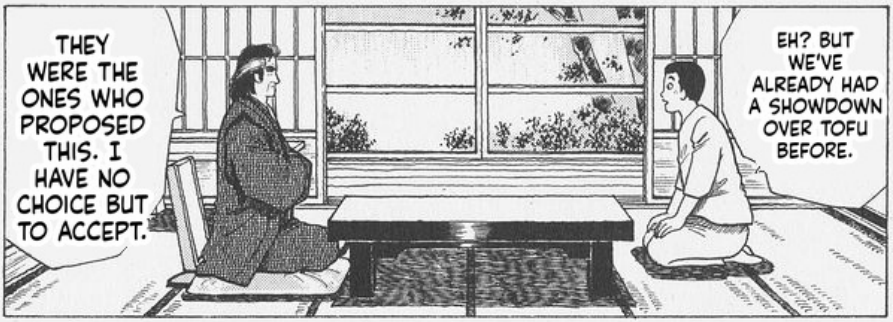
22

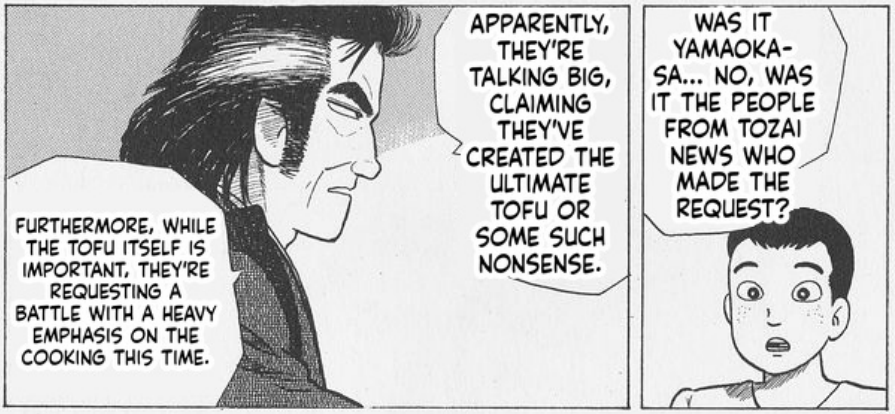

VERY WELL, I SHALL FACE HIM WITH A TOFU DISH.

第6話
新・豆腐勝負〈中編〉

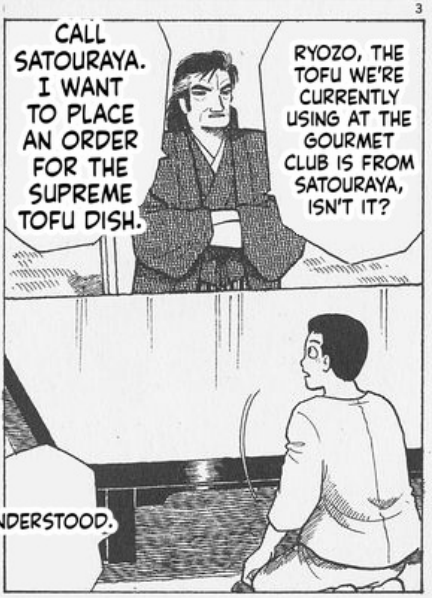


*TL NOTE: I THOUGHT THAT SINCE 'KURABU TABEMI' TRANSLATES ROUGHLY TO "CLUB OF EATING BEAUTIFULLY" THAT I WOULD JUST LEAVE IT ALONE RATHER THAN MESS WITH THE ART. OBVIOUSLY, WE KNOW IT'S THE GOURMET CLUB SIGNAGE.


THEY WERE THE ONES WHO PROPOSED THIS. I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT.
EH? BUT WE'VE ALREADY HAD A SHOWDOWN OVER TOFU BEFORE.

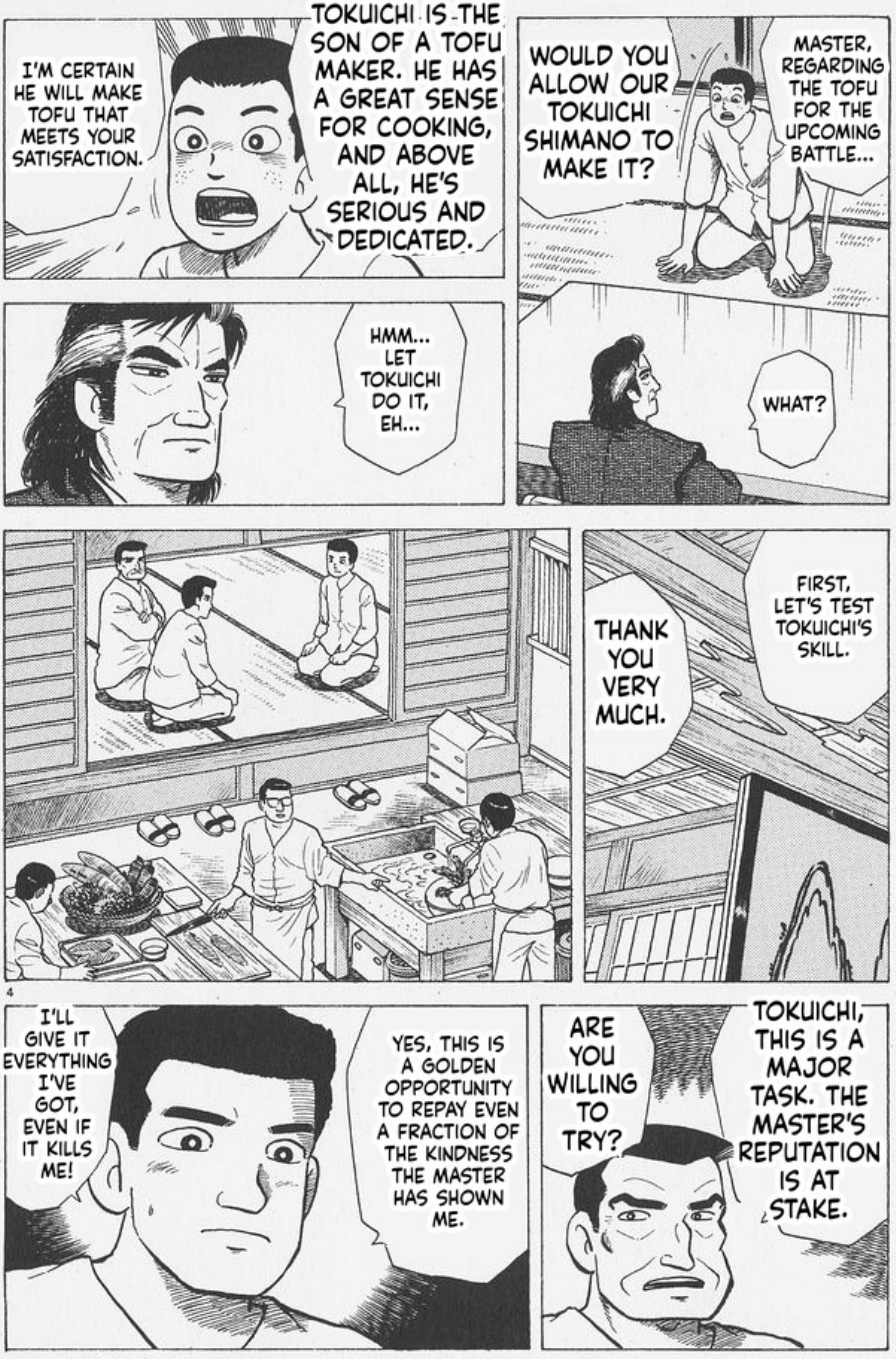

APPARENTLY, THEY'RE TALKING BIG, CLAIMING THEY'VE CREATED THE ULTIMATE TOFU OR SOME SUCH NONSENSE.
FURTHERMORE, WHILE THE TOFU ITSELF IS IMPORTANT, THEY'RE REQUESTING A BATTLE WITH A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE COOKING THIS TIME.
WAS IT YAMAOKA-SA... NO, WAS IT THE PEOPLE FROM TOZAI NEWS WHO MADE THE REQUEST?

3

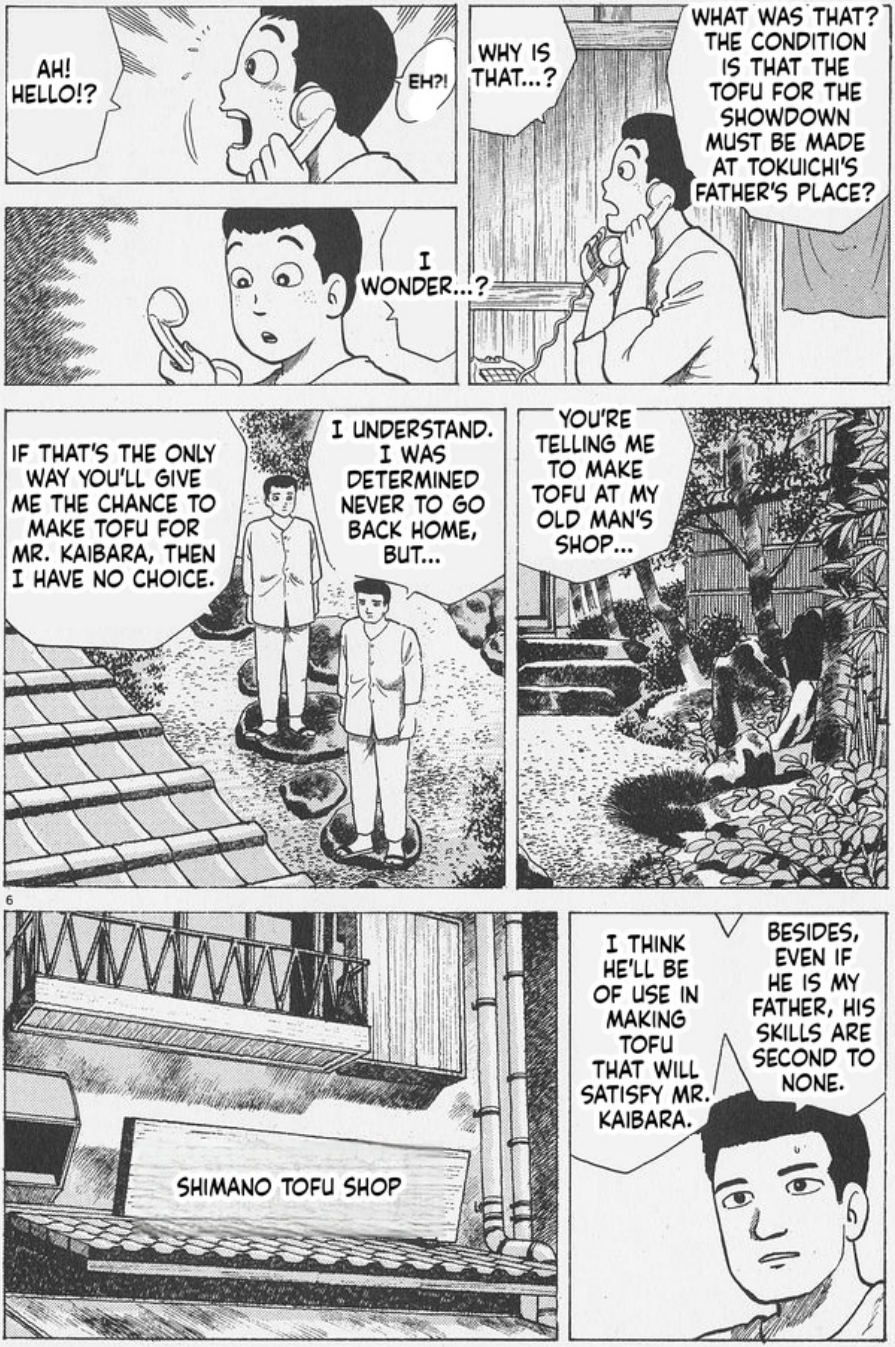

CALL SATOURAYA. I WANT TO PLACE AN ORDER FOR THE SUPREME TOFU DISH.
RYOZO, THE TOFU WE'RE CURRENTLY USING AT THE GOURMET CLUB IS FROM SATOURAYA, ISN'T IT?
UNDERSTOOD.

WHAT'S THAT?

PERHAPS YAMAOKA-SAN IS DOING THIS FOR TOKUICHI'S SAKE...

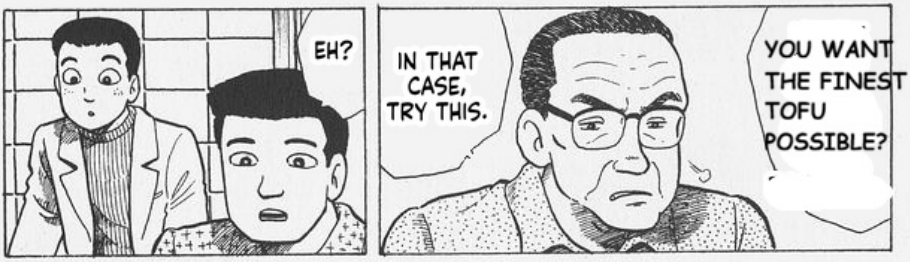

I'M CERTAIN HE WILL MAKE TOFU THAT MEETS YOUR SATISFACTION.
TOKUICHI IS THE SON OF A TOFU MAKER. HE HAS A GREAT SENSE FOR COOKING, AND ABOVE ALL, HE'S SERIOUS AND DEDICATED.
HMM... LET TOKUICHI DO IT, EH...
WOULD YOU ALLOW OUR TOKUICHI SHIMANO TO MAKE IT?
MASTER, REGARDING THE TOFU FOR THE UPCOMING BATTLE...
WHAT?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
FIRST, LET'S TEST TOKUICHI'S SKILL.
4
I'LL GIVE IT EVERYTHING I'VE GOT, EVEN IF IT KILLS ME!
YES, THIS IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO REPAY EVEN A FRACTION OF THE KINDNESS THE MASTER HAS SHOWN ME.
ARE YOU WILLING TO TRY?
TOKUICHI, THIS IS A MAJOR TASK. THE MASTER'S REPUTATION IS AT STAKE.

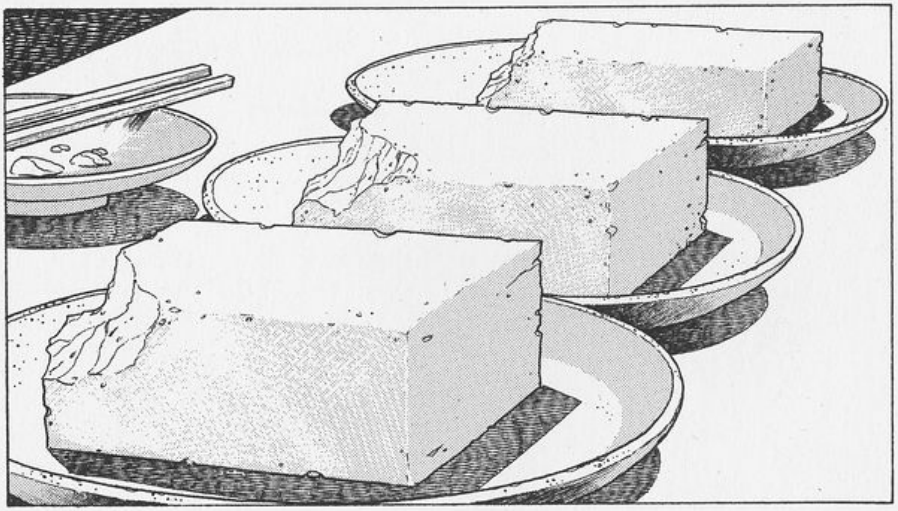
AH, SO YOU'VE HEARD ALREADY...
RYOZO-KUN, ABOUT THE NEXT 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' CHALLENGE...
YES.
RYOZO-KUN, IT'S FOR YOU.
MR. YAMAOKA?
IT'S MASTER SHIRO.
THAT IS, ASSUMING THE TOFU TOKUICHI MAKES IS TO THE MASTER'S LIKING.
WE'VE DECIDED TO HAVE TOKUICHI MAKE THE TOFU FOR THE UPCOMING CONFRONTATION.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
AND SO... WAIT, WHAT?
5
JUST DON'T FORGET ONE THING.
AS EXPECTED OF RYOZO-KUN, YOU UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY. THAT'S ALL I ASK.
HOW DOES THIS SOUND TO YOU?

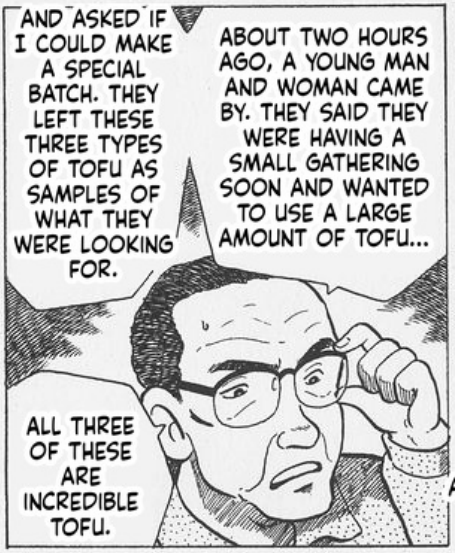

AH! HELLO!?
EH?!
I WONDER...?
WHY IS THAT...?
WHAT WAS THAT? THE CONDITION IS THAT THE TOFU FOR THE SHOWDOWN MUST BE MADE AT TOKUICHI'S FATHER'S PLACE?
IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL GIVE ME THE CHANCE TO MAKE TOFU FOR MR. KAIBARA, THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE.
I UNDERSTAND. I WAS DETERMINED NEVER TO GO BACK HOME, BUT...
YOU'RE TELLING ME TO MAKE TOFU AT MY OLD MAN'S SHOP...
6
SHIMANO TOFU SHOP
I THINK HE'LL BE OF USE IN MAKING TOFU THAT WILL SATISFY MR. KAIBARA.
BESIDES, EVEN IF HE IS MY FATHER, HIS SKILLS ARE SECOND TO NONE.

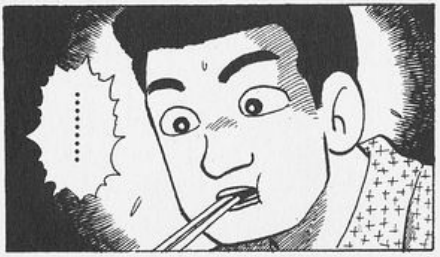
TAKAKO.
ニヤ
ニヤ
TAKAKO, I'M SORRY...
BIG BROTHER!
7
I WANT TO BORROW DAD'S STRENGTH. WHAT DO YOU THINK...?
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS...

BUT TODAY, FATHER IS A BIT...
AH...
.....?
SINCE YOU'RE COMING BACK, I'M SURE FATHER WILL FORGIVE YOU EVENTUALLY...
FATHER...
8
FATHER, I HAVE TO MAKE A TOFU BETTER THAN ANY OTHER AS A WAY TO REPAY THE TEACHER WHO TOOK CARE OF ME.
I NEED YOU TO LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH.
SO PLEASE, FATHER...
TOKUICHI IS HERE TO MAKE AMENDS.


EH?
IN THAT CASE, TRY THIS.
YOU WANT THE FINEST TOFU POSSIBLE?




ABOUT TWO HOURS AGO, A YOUNG MAN AND WOMAN CAME BY. THEY SAID THEY WERE HAVING A SMALL GATHERING SOON AND WANTED TO USE A LARGE AMOUNT OF TOFU...
AND ASKED IF I COULD MAKE A SPECIAL BATCH. THEY LEFT THESE THREE TYPES OF TOFU AS SAMPLES OF WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.
ALL THREE OF THESE ARE INCREDIBLE TOFU.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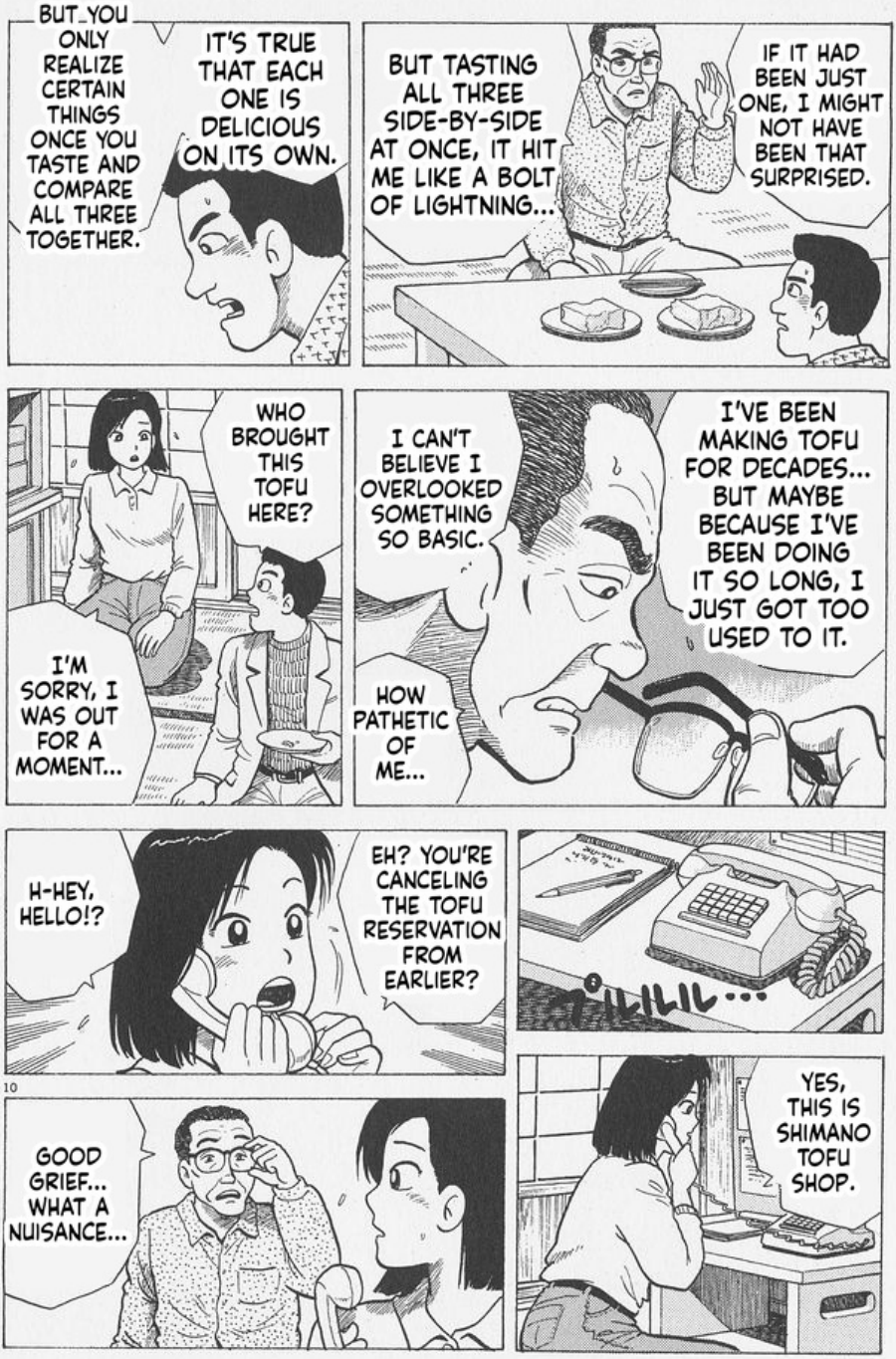
9

T-THIS IS...
I'M AMAZED...!

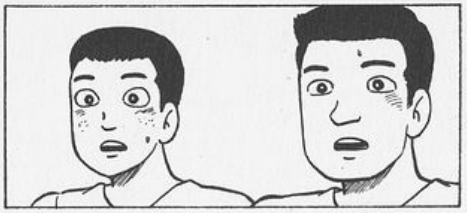

IF IT HAD BEEN JUST ONE, I MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN THAT SURPRISED.
BUT TASTING ALL THREE SIDE-BY-SIDE AT ONCE, IT HIT ME LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING...
IT'S TRUE THAT EACH ONE IS DELICIOUS ON ITS OWN.
BUT YOU ONLY REALIZE CERTAIN THINGS ONCE YOU TASTE AND COMPARE ALL THREE TOGETHER.
I'VE BEEN MAKING TOFU FOR DECADES... BUT MAYBE BECAUSE I'VE BEEN DOING IT SO LONG, I JUST GOT TOO USED TO IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I OVERLOOKED SOMETHING SO BASIC.
HOW PATHETIC OF ME...
WHO BROUGHT THIS TOFU HERE?
I'M SORRY, I WAS OUT FOR A MOMENT...
ピルルル...
EH? YOU'RE CANCELING THE TOFU RESERVATION FROM EARLIER?
H-HEY, HELLO!?
YES, THIS IS SHIMANO TOFU SHOP.
GOOD GRIEF... WHAT A NUISANCE...

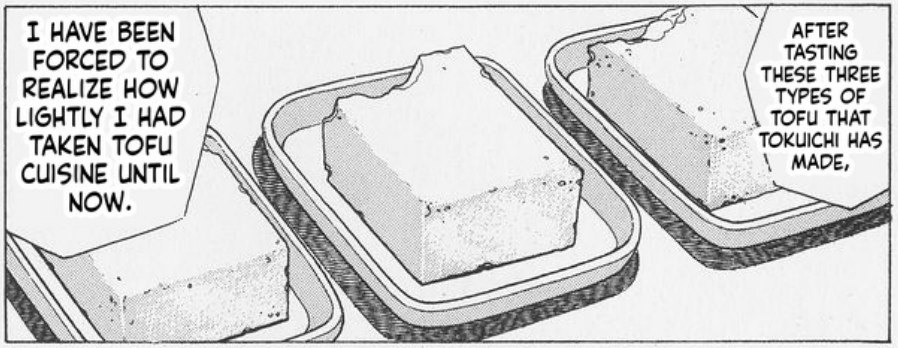
FATHER, IF WE FOLLOW THIS LOGIC, WE CAN MAKE TOFU THAT'S EVEN MORE DELICIOUS THAN THESE THREE, RIGHT?
WHAT?!
WHO ON EARTH COULD HAVE...?!
COULD IT BE...?
UGH...
I'LL HELP TOO!
TOKUICHI! WE'RE STARTING OVER FROM THE BEAN SELECTION!
OF COURSE! ONCE I FIGURE OUT WHAT THE HELL I WAS MISSING, I CAN MAKE SOMETHING EVEN BETTER THAN THIS!
YOU BET!

11

美食倶楽部

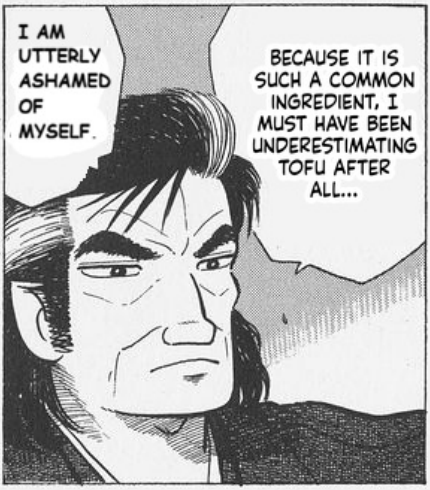
WE START OVER.
RYOZO, I AM CHANGING EVERY SINGLE MENU ITEM I PREPARED FOR YOU FOR THIS UPCOMING TOFU CHALLENGE.

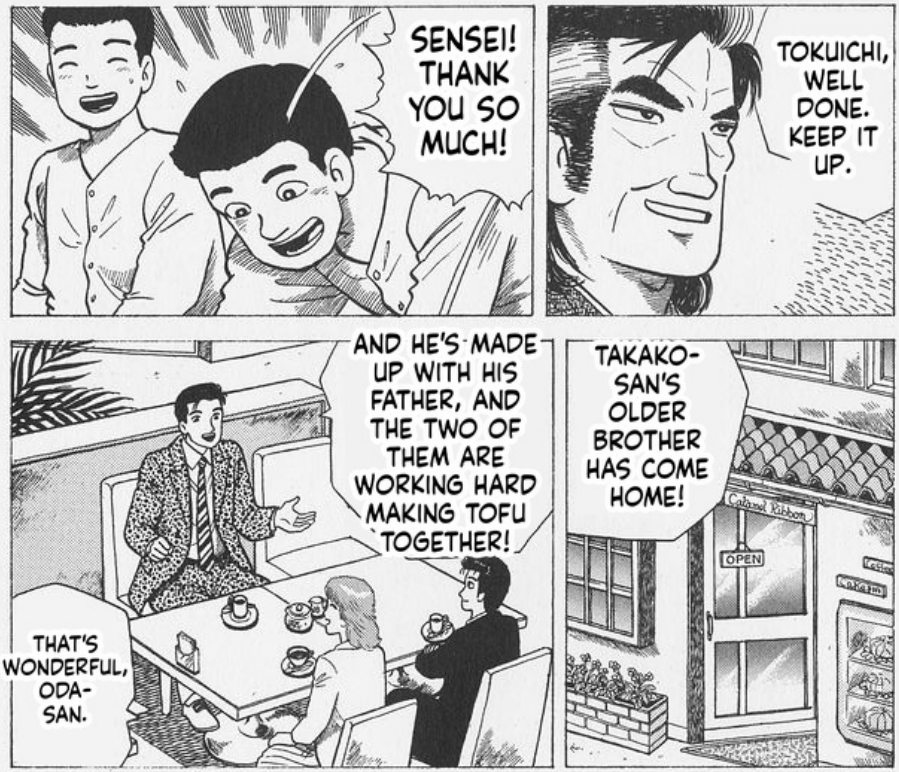


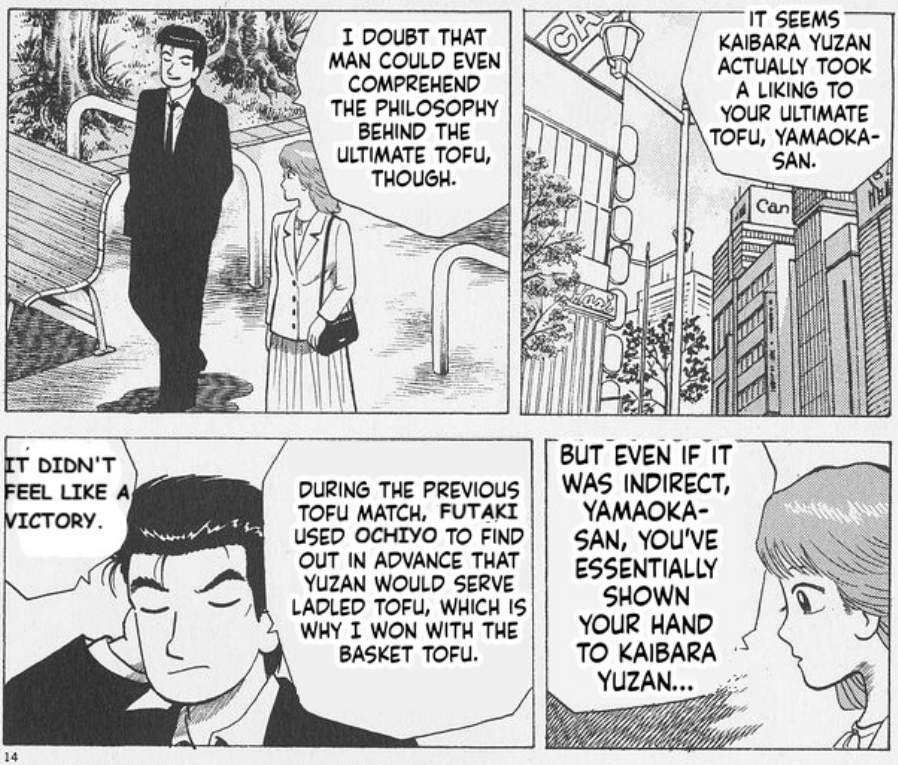

I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO REALIZE HOW LIGHTLY I HAD TAKEN TOFU CUISINE UNTIL NOW.
AFTER TASTING THESE THREE TYPES OF TOFU THAT TOKUICHI HAS MADE,

12

THESE THREE TYPES OF TOFU HAVE IGNITED MY IMAGINATION.
SENSEI!
I WILL BE ABLE TO CREATE TOFU DISHES TRULY WORTHY OF THE SUPREME MENU.


I AM UTTERLY ASHAMED OF MYSELF.
BECAUSE IT IS SUCH A COMMON INGREDIENT, I MUST HAVE BEEN UNDERESTIMATING TOFU AFTER ALL...


SENSEI! THANK YOU SO MUCH!
TOKUICHI, WELL DONE. KEEP IT UP.
AND HE'S MADE UP WITH HIS FATHER, AND THE TWO OF THEM ARE WORKING HARD MAKING TOFU TOGETHER!
THAT'S WONDERFUL, ODA-SAN.
TAKAKO-SAN'S OLDER BROTHER HAS COME HOME!
Oatmeal Ribbon
OPEN
13
TAKAKO-SAN WON'T HAVE TO WORK AS MUCH, AND SHE MIGHT CONSIDER MARRYING ME.
IF HER BROTHER STAYS HOME FOR GOOD LIKE THIS,
FROM HERE ON OUT, IT'S A GAMBLE.
I REALIZED TAKAKO-SAN'S FATHER'S SKILLS ARE TOP-NOTCH.
AFTER TASTING THE TOFU I HAD YOU BUY,
IF HE HADN'T, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SET THIS PLAN IN MOTION.


I DOUBT THAT MAN COULD EVEN COMPREHEND THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE ULTIMATE TOFU, THOUGH.
IT SEEMS KAIBARA YUZAN ACTUALLY TOOK A LIKING TO YOUR ULTIMATE TOFU, YAMAOKA-SAN.
Can
IT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE A VICTORY.
DURING THE PREVIOUS TOFU MATCH, FUTAKI USED OCHIYO TO FIND OUT IN ADVANCE THAT YUZAN WOULD SERVE LADLED TOFU, WHICH IS WHY I WON WITH THE BASKET TOFU.
BUT EVEN IF IT WAS INDIRECT, YAMAOKA-SAN, YOU'VE ESSENTIALLY SHOWN YOUR HAND TO KAIBARA YUZAN...

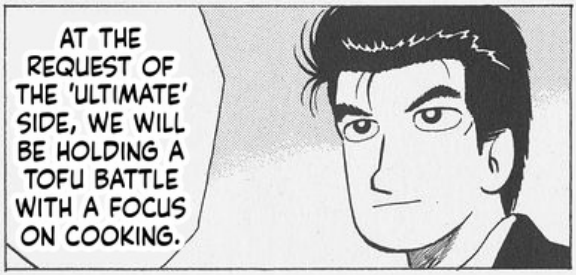
14

KU... KURITA-SAN!
IT'LL BE A REAL VICTORY THIS TIME, AND IT'LL FEEL GREAT!
THIS TIME, I SHOW HIM MY HAND BEFORE THE SHOWDOWN!
THAT WAY, EVEN IF YOU LOST, YOU'D HAVE AN EXCUSE.

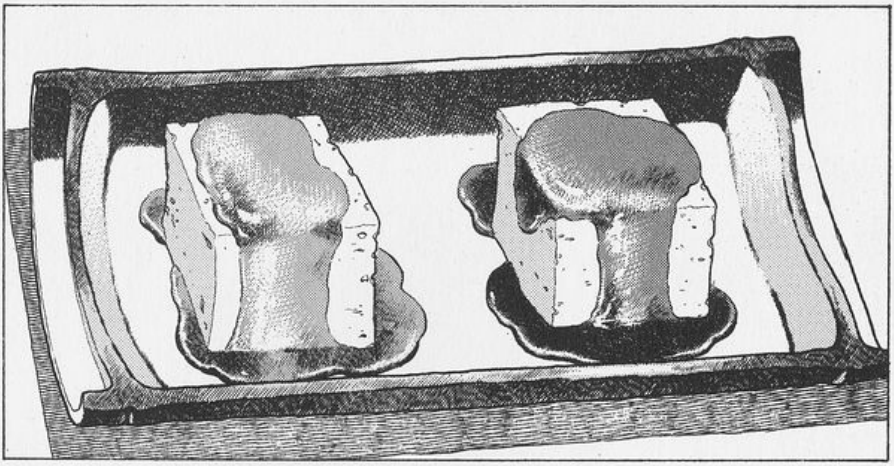
NOW, WE SHALL BEGIN WITH THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE, WHO WON THE PREVIOUS ROUND.

SINCE THE LAST MATCH WAS DECIDED MORE BY THE TOFU ITSELF RATHER THAN THE TOFU DISHES,

15


AT THE REQUEST OF THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE, WE WILL BE HOLDING A TOFU BATTLE WITH A FOCUS ON COOKING.

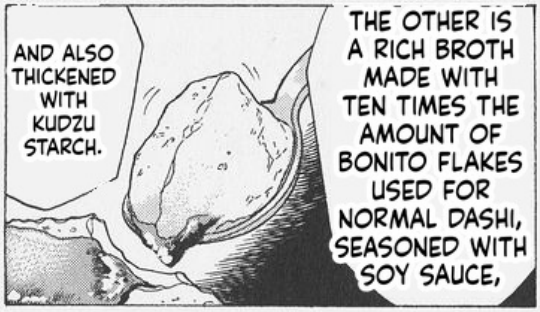
PROOF IS BETTER THAN THEORY; PLEASE, TRY THEM FOR YOURSELF FIRST.



ONE IS A PLUM PULP SAUCE, MADE BY STRAINING PLUM FLESH, THINNING IT WITH DASHI, AND THICKENING IT WITH KUDZU STARCH.

PLACE THE TOFU IN A POT FILLED WITH WATER, HEAT IT UNTIL IT REACHES BODY TEMPERATURE, THEN CUT IT INTO BITE-SIZED PIECES AND POUR THE SAUCE OVER IT.

16


AND ALSO THICKENED WITH KUDZU STARCH.
THE OTHER IS A RICH BROTH MADE WITH TEN TIMES THE AMOUNT OF BONITO FLAKES USED FOR NORMAL DASHI, SEASONED WITH SOY SAUCE,

IT JUST CRUMBLES AWAY ON THE TONGUE LIKE MELTING SNOW.
WHOA! A TEXTURE SO DELICATE IT'S ALMOST UNSETTLING, AND SUCH A SMOOTH MOUTHFEEL.
THIS TOFU... CALLING IT 'SOFT' DOESN'T EVEN DO IT JUSTICE!
HO!
!
WHEN IT MEETS THE LIGHT YET PROFOUND FLAVORS OF THE PLUM PULP AND BONITO FLAKES, THE TASTE BECOMES EXCEPTIONALLY REFINED...
DESPITE BEING SO SOFT, THE AROMA IS RICH AND THE FLAVOR IS INTENSE!
17

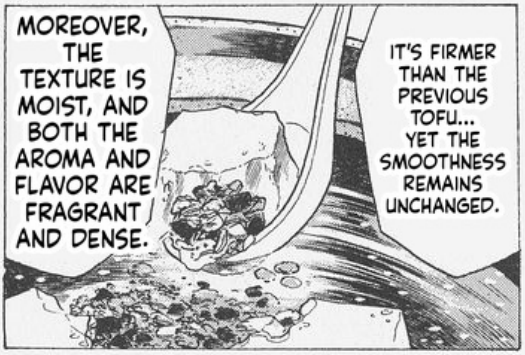
IT WAS THEN PLACED INTO A SOUP MADE FROM A WHOLE CHICKEN AND JINHUA HAM, AND STEAMED INSIDE THE POT.
SUNLIGHT, SEASONED WITH SOY SAUCE AND A HINT OF OYSTER SAUCE.
A HOLE WAS MADE IN THE CENTER OF THE TOFU, AND INTO IT WENT A MIXTURE OF FINELY MINCED REHYDRATED DRIED ABALONE AND CHOPPED YELLOW CHIVES GROWN WITHOUT

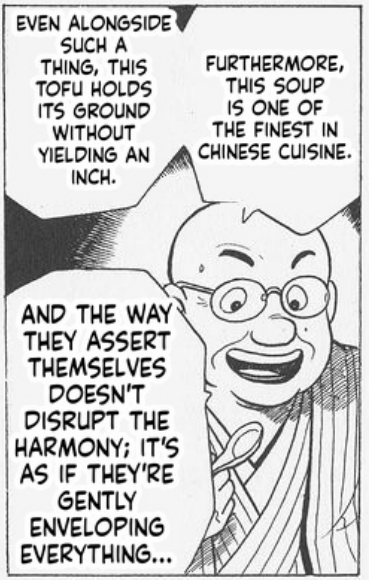
THE TASTE AND SCENT ARE RICH YET ELEGANT, WITH A PLEASANT AFTERTASTE THAT LINGERS BEAUTIFULLY.
ABALONE AND YELLOW CHIVES... IT'S A GOLDEN COMBINATION.

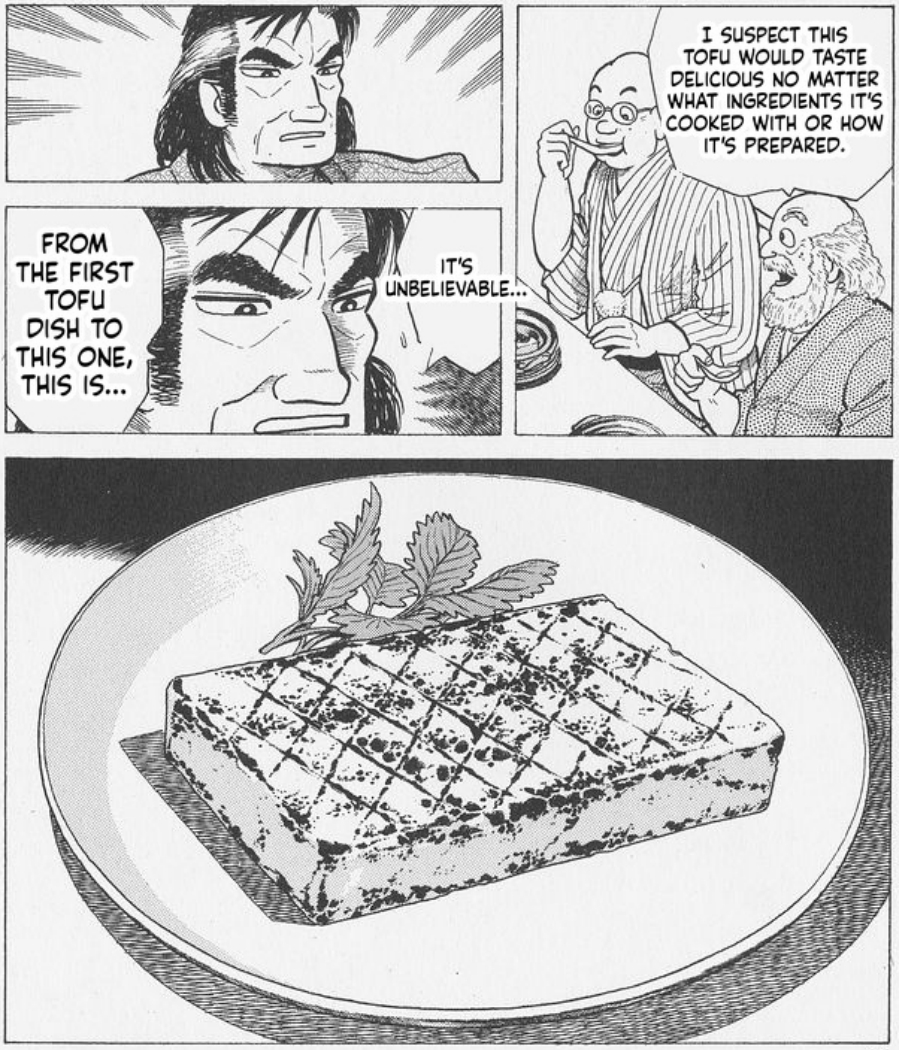
THIS REALLY WHETS THE APPETITE!
OHO, WHAT A WONDERFUL AROMA!

THIS TOFU IS TRULY ASTONISHING.

18


MOREOVER, THE TEXTURE IS MOIST, AND BOTH THE AROMA AND FLAVOR ARE FRAGRANT AND DENSE.
IT'S FIRMER THAN THE PREVIOUS TOFU... YET THE SMOOTHNESS REMAINS UNCHANGED.


EVEN ALONGSIDE SUCH A THING, THIS TOFU HOLDS ITS GROUND WITHOUT YIELDING AN INCH.
FURTHERMORE, THIS SOUP IS ONE OF THE FINEST IN CHINESE CUISINE.
AND THE WAY THEY ASSERT THEMSELVES DOESN'T DISRUPT THE HARMONY; IT'S AS IF THEY'RE GENTLY ENVELOPING EVERYTHING...

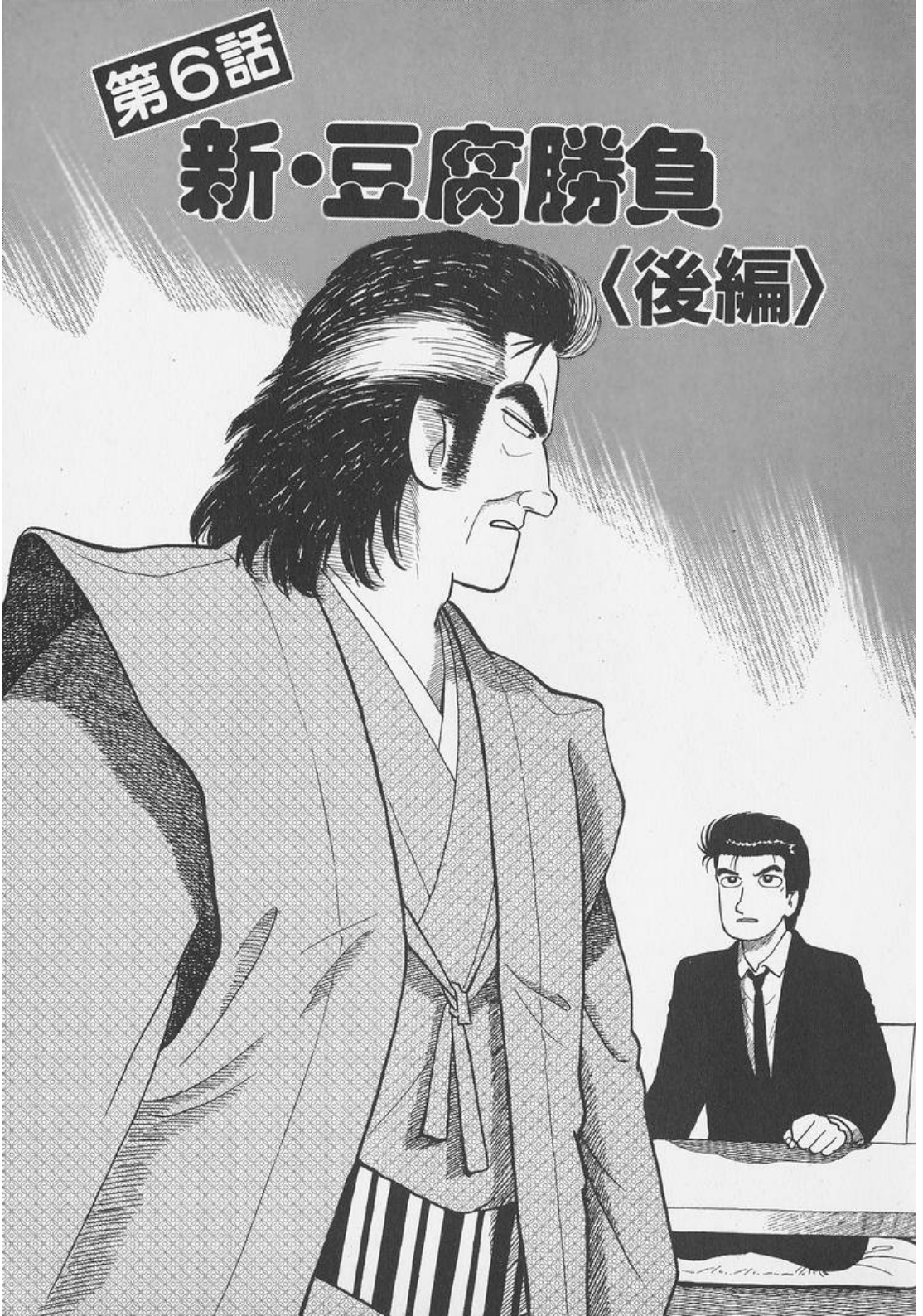

I SUSPECT THIS TOFU WOULD TASTE DELICIOUS NO MATTER WHAT INGREDIENTS IT'S COOKED WITH OR HOW IT'S PREPARED.
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE...
FROM THE FIRST TOFU DISH TO THIS ONE, THIS IS...
19
I SLICED THE TOFU TO HALF ITS THICKNESS, SEARED THE SURFACE OVER A HIGH CHARCOAL FLAME, AND TOPPED IT WITH SAUCE.
IT IS A TOFU STEAK.

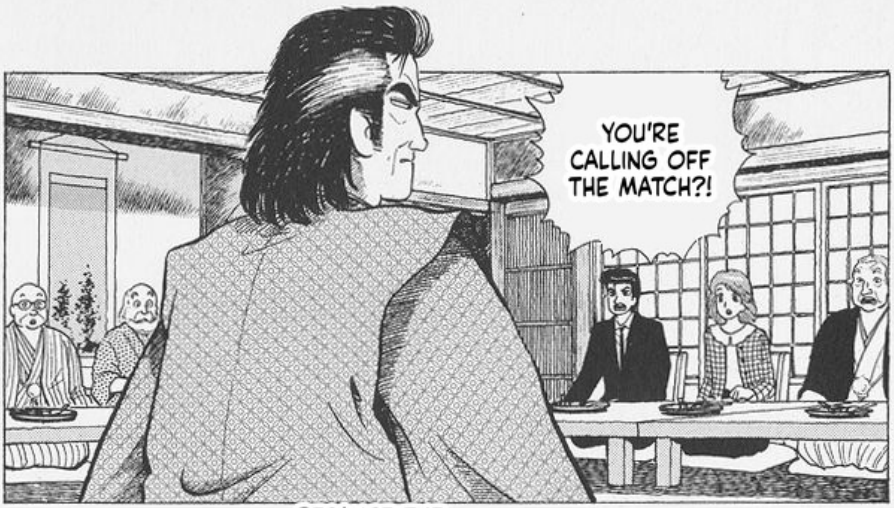
IT HAS SUCH A STRONG, FRAGRANT AROMA OF TOASTED TOFU!
TO THAT, I ADDED BOILED BEEF LIVER THAT HAS BEEN GROUND AND STRAINED THROUGH A SIEVE,
AND THEN SEASONED IT WITH RED WINE, PEPPER, AND SOY SAUCE.
THE SAUCE IS MADE BY REDUCING A STOCK SIMMERED FOR A LONG TIME FROM BEEF BONES AND SHANKS,
WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS TOFU?!
I HAD COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN THIS WONDERFUL, SAVORY FRAGRANCE.
MOST GRILLED TOFU THESE DAYS JUST HAS THE SURFACE BROWNED WITH A GAS BURNER,
NORMALLY, WHEN YOU GRILL TOFU, IT BECOMES CRUMBLY OR THE TEXTURE GETS COARSE.
20
BUT THE INSIDE IS MOIST, UNIFORM, AND HAS A FINE, CONSISTENT MOUTHFEEL.
BUT THIS TOFU HAS A SURFACE WITH A DELIGHTFUL, CRISPY TEXTURE,
IT'S DENSELY PACKED, WITH A HEAVY, SUBSTANTIAL MASS.
IT'S THE FIRMEST ONE YET... NO, CALLING IT 'FIRM' IS A MISTAKE.
IT'S AS SMOOTH AS EVER, WITHOUT A SINGLE GRAIN TO CATCH ON THE TONGUE!

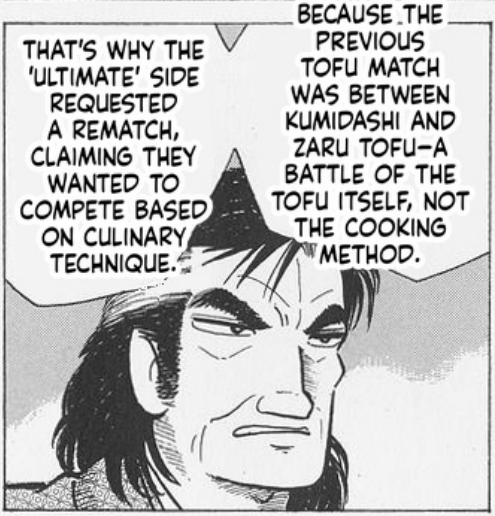
IT'S THE SAME AS THE THREE TYPES OF TOFU TOKUICHI MADE...
THESE THREE TYPES OF TOFU...
ESSENCE OF SOYBEAN FLAVOR— THE 'MEAT OF THE FIELDS'— CONCENTRATED TO THE LIMIT.
THIS TOFU IS SO RESILIENT, IT STANDS ITS GROUND FIRMLY AGAINST THIS CONCENTRATED BEEF SAUCE! THIS TOFU IS THE
WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS TOFU?!
I'D LIKE TO HEAR THE EXPLANATION FROM THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE!
TELL US THE SECRET BEHIND THIS TOFU!
21
YAMAOKA-KUN, KURITA-KUN, PLEASE EXPLAIN THIS TOFU TO EVERYONE.
YAMAOKA WASN'T LYING WHEN HE SAID HE'D PERFECTED THE ULTIMATE TOFU FOR COOKING!
W-WE CAN WIN WITH THIS!

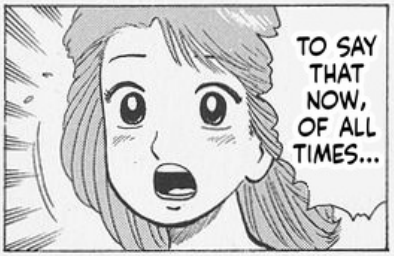
ULTIMATE TOFU!
THE ULTIMATE TOFU FOR COOKING!
22
THAT IS THE TOFU YOU ALL JUST TASTED.
WE HAVE COMPLETED THE ULTIMATE TOFU FOR COOKING.
NOW, LET ME EXPLAIN THIS TOFU TO YOU.
WAIT!
THIS MATCH IS CANCELLED!

第6話
新・豆腐勝負
〈後編〉



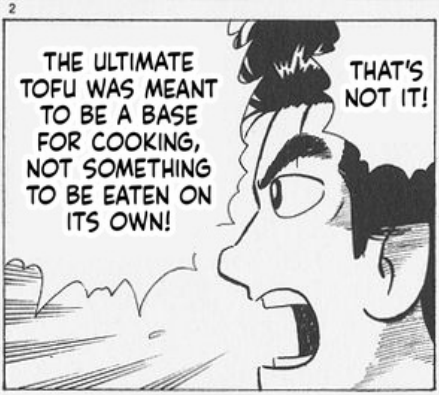

YOU'RE CALLING OFF THE MATCH?!

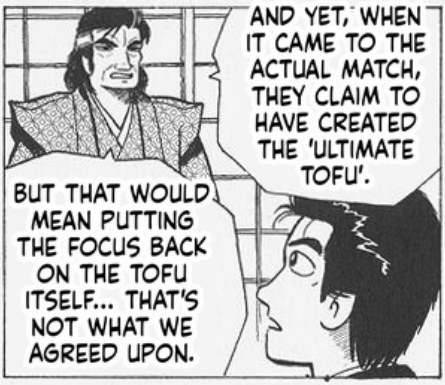

THAT'S WHY THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE REQUESTED A REMATCH, CLAIMING THEY WANTED TO COMPETE BASED ON CULINARY TECHNIQUE.
BECAUSE THE PREVIOUS TOFU MATCH WAS BETWEEN KUMIDASHI AND ZARU TOFU—A BATTLE OF THE TOFU ITSELF, NOT THE COOKING METHOD.


TO SAY THAT NOW, OF ALL TIMES...

KAIBARA-SENSEI, WHY...?

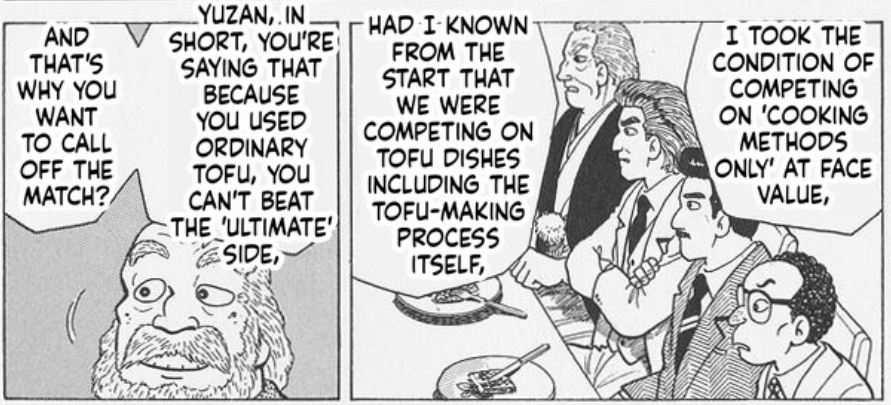
2


THE ULTIMATE TOFU WAS MEANT TO BE A BASE FOR COOKING, NOT SOMETHING TO BE EATEN ON ITS OWN!
THAT'S NOT IT!

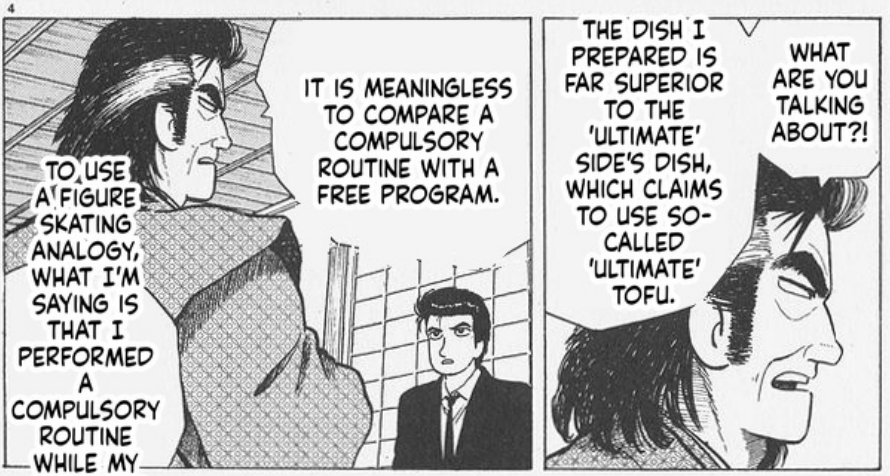

AND YET, WHEN IT CAME TO THE ACTUAL MATCH, THEY CLAIM TO HAVE CREATED THE 'ULTIMATE TOFU'.
BUT THAT WOULD MEAN PUTTING THE FOCUS BACK ON THE TOFU ITSELF... THAT'S NOT WHAT WE AGREED UPON.

COOKING TECHNIQUE IS WHAT MATTERS MOST!
IT WAS MADE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WHICH TOFU BEST SUITS A SPECIFIC COOKING METHOD!
W-WELL... THAT'S ONLY IF THE ULTIMATE TOFU IS AVAILABLE...
WASN'T IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO MAKE THE DISHES YOU SERVED HERE TODAY?!
BUT... IF THAT SO-CALLED 'ULTIMATE TOFU' OF YOURS WASN'T THERE...
3
AH, THAT'S...
THIS IS CLEARLY A FAILURE ON THE PART OF THE SECRETARIAT.
CERTAINLY...
IF WE ARE TO COMPETE ON COOKING TECHNIQUES, THE SECRETARIAT SHOULD HAVE PROVIDED THE SAME TOFU TO BOTH PARTIES.

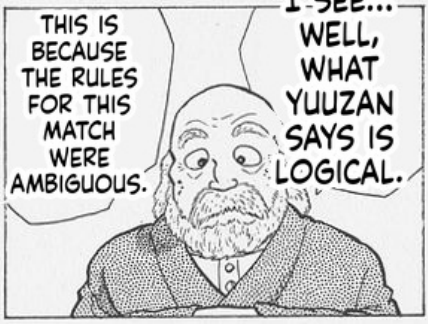
IF WE ARE TO COMPETE ON THE SUPERIORITY OF COOKING METHODS,
I WOULD HAVE NATURALLY STARTED BY MAKING THE SUPREME TOFU SUITED FOR THE DISH AND BROUGHT A DIFFERENT RECIPE.
I WAS TRYING TO SHOW THAT EVEN ORDINARY TOFU CAN BE THIS DELICIOUS DEPENDING ON HOW IT'S PREPARED...
WELL, THAT'S A FAIR POINT.
THEN WE SHOULD USE THE TOFU WE SERVE DAILY AT THE GOURMET CLUB.

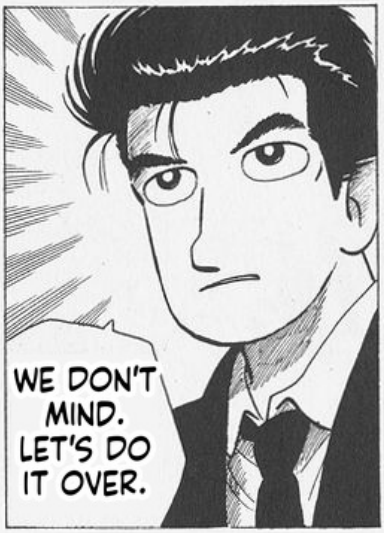

AND THAT'S WHY YOU WANT TO CALL OFF THE MATCH?
YUZAN, IN SHORT, YOU'RE SAYING THAT BECAUSE YOU USED ORDINARY TOFU, YOU CAN'T BEAT THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE,
HAD I KNOWN FROM THE START THAT WE WERE COMPETING ON TOFU DISHES INCLUDING THE TOFU-MAKING PROCESS ITSELF,
I TOOK THE CONDITION OF COMPETING ON 'COOKING METHODS ONLY' AT FACE VALUE,

4


TO USE A FIGURE SKATING ANALOGY, WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT I PERFORMED A COMPULSORY ROUTINE WHILE MY OPPONENT PERFORMED A FREE PROGRAM.
IT IS MEANINGLESS TO COMPARE A COMPULSORY ROUTINE WITH A FREE PROGRAM.
THE DISH I PREPARED IS FAR SUPERIOR TO THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE'S DISH, WHICH CLAIMS TO USE SO-CALLED 'ULTIMATE' TOFU.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

HOW ABOUT WE CLEARLY DEFINE THAT TOFU DISHES INCLUDE THE MAKING OF THE TOFU ITSELF, AND START OVER?


THIS IS BECAUSE THE RULES FOR THIS MATCH WERE AMBIGUOUS.
I SEE... WELL, WHAT YUUZAN SAYS IS LOGICAL.


WE DON'T MIND. LET'S DO IT OVER.

THE 'SUPREME' SIDE WILL GET TO SEE OUR HAND AND THEN START OVER FROM SCRATCH!
BUT THAT PUTS US AT A DISADVANTAGE!

UGH... THIS IS BAD...

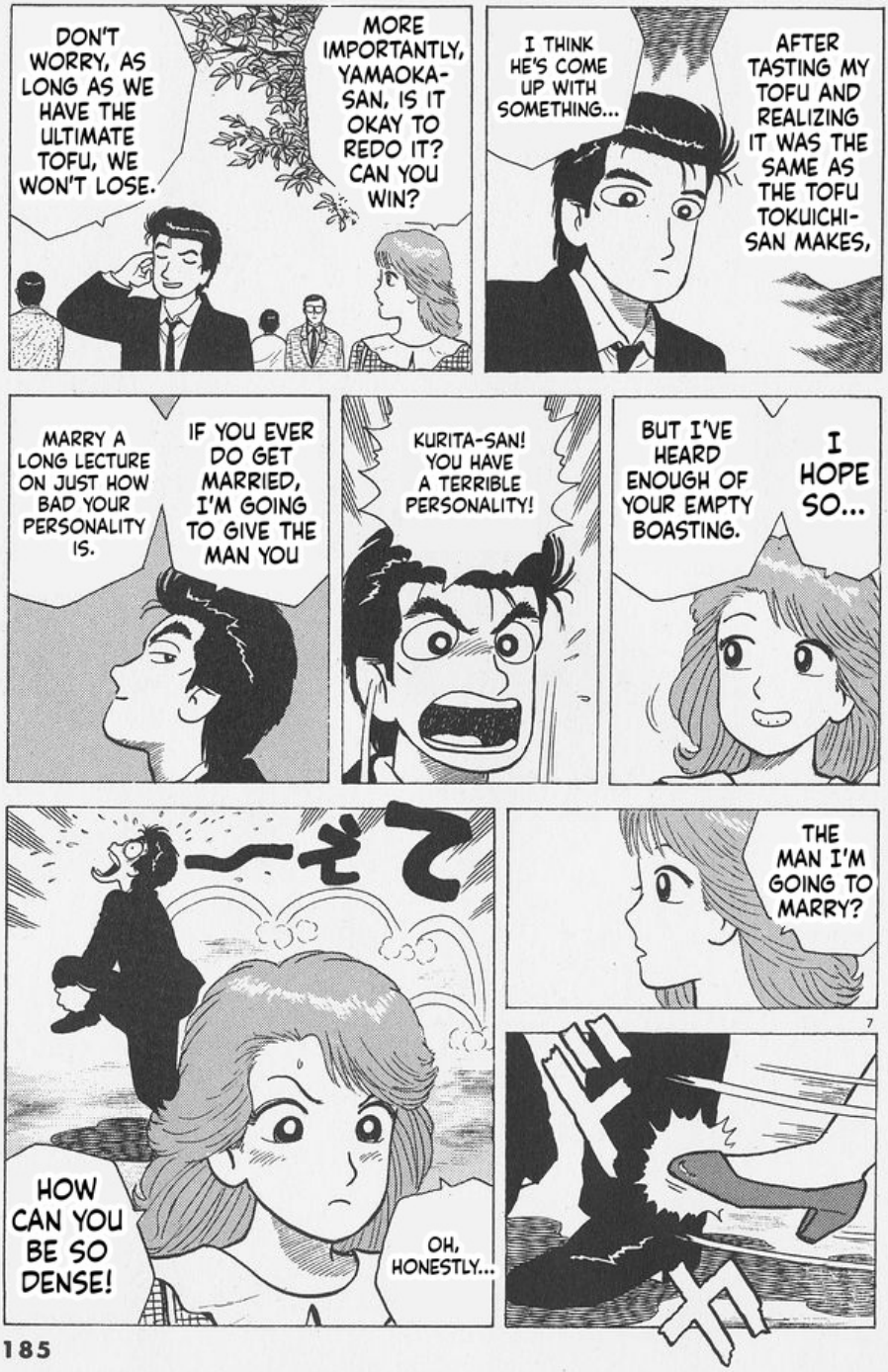
5

VERY WELL.

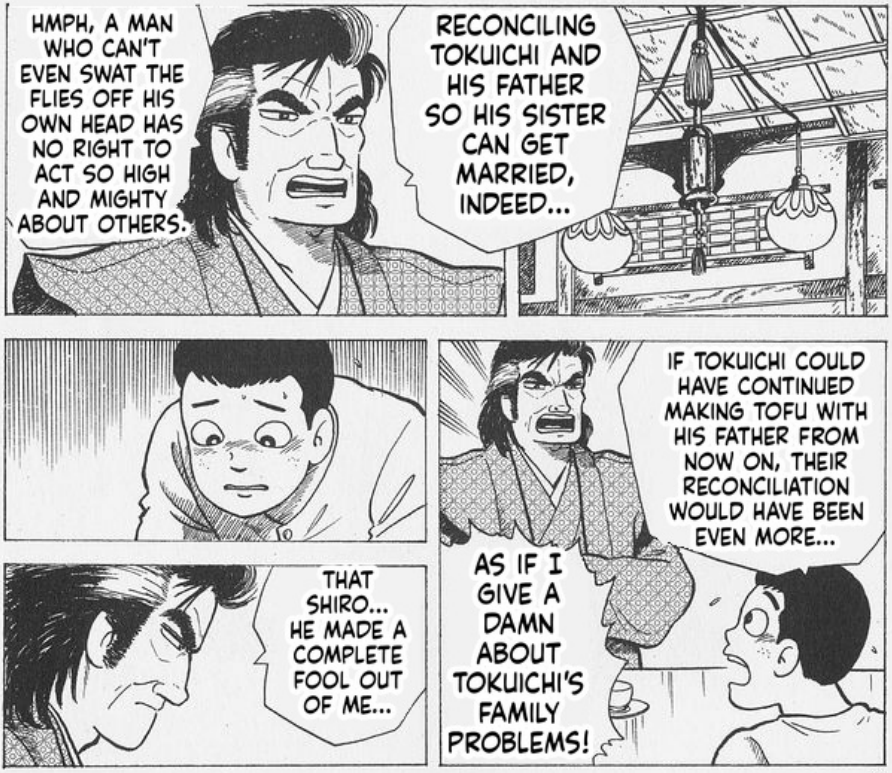
WE SHALL REDO THIS AS A 'ULTIMATE' VS. 'SUPREME' TOFU SHOWDOWN, INCLUDING THE TOFU-MAKING PROCESS.

Y-YAMAOKA! WE'RE ABOUT TO WIN BECAUSE THE OTHER SIDE FORFEITED!

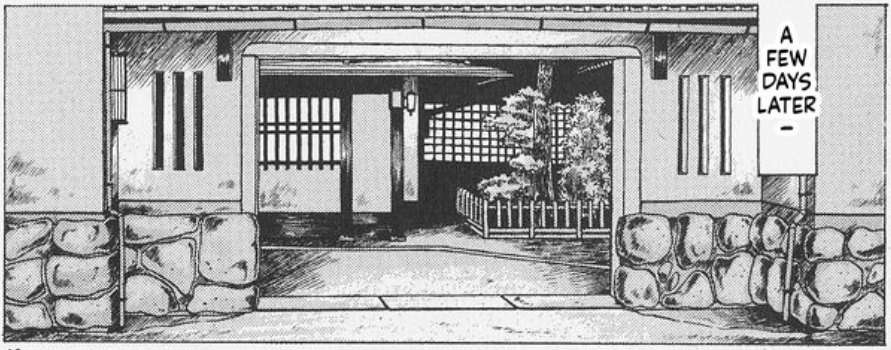
ACTING LIKE SUCH A TOUGH GUY...!
THAT YAMAOKA...
I'M DECLARING THIS MATCH A DRAW AND CALLING FOR A REMATCH.
TH-THEN THAT MEANS...
AND YET HE CLAIMED IT WAS JUST HIS USUAL ORDINARY TOFU...
YUZAN WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BROUGHT THE ULTIMATE TOFU MADE BY TOKUICHI-SAN TODAY.
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT...
IT SEEMS HE REALLY WANTED A DO-OVER...


DON'T WORRY, AS LONG AS WE HAVE THE ULTIMATE TOFU, WE WON'T LOSE.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, YAMAOKA-SAN, IS IT OKAY TO REDO IT? CAN YOU WIN?
I THINK HE'S COME UP WITH SOMETHING...
AFTER TASTING MY TOFU AND REALIZING IT WAS THE SAME AS THE TOFU TOKUICHI-SAN MAKES,
MARRY A LONG LECTURE ON JUST HOW BAD YOUR PERSONALITY IS.
IF YOU EVER DO GET MARRIED, I'M GOING TO GIVE THE MAN YOU
KURITA-SAN! YOU HAVE A TERRIBLE PERSONALITY!
BUT I'VE HEARD ENOUGH OF YOUR EMPTY BOASTING.
I HOPE SO...
ーそて
HOW CAN YOU BE SO DENSE!
OH, HONESTLY...
THE MAN I'M GOING TO MARRY?
7

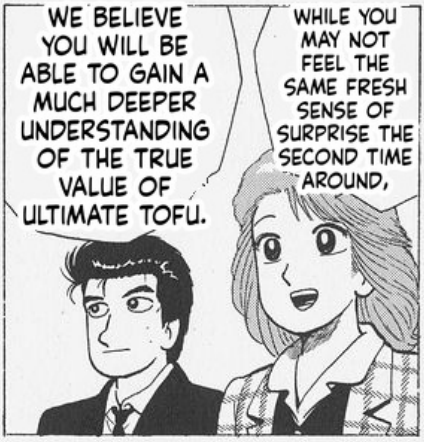
I AM TERRIBLY SORRY...
THAT TOFU WAS MADE USING A SAMPLE GIVEN BY A CUSTOMER WHO CAME TO TOKUICHI'S FATHER'S SHOP AS A REFERENCE.
GOURMET CLUB
I BELIEVE IT WAS MR. YAMAOKA AND MS. KURITA.
IT BECAME CLEAR TODAY AFTER TASTING MR. YAMAOKA'S TOFU.
YOU KNOW WHO IT WAS.
RYOZO, TELL THE TRUTH.
8
BUT MR. YAMAOKA WAS WORRIED ABOUT TOKUICHI'S FAMILY...
I DON'T KNOW MR. YAMAOKA'S TRUE INTENTIONS.
WHAT?
SO IT WAS HIM AFTER ALL...
THE TOFU SHIRO MADE AND TOKUICHI'S TOFU WERE JUST TOO SIMILAR...

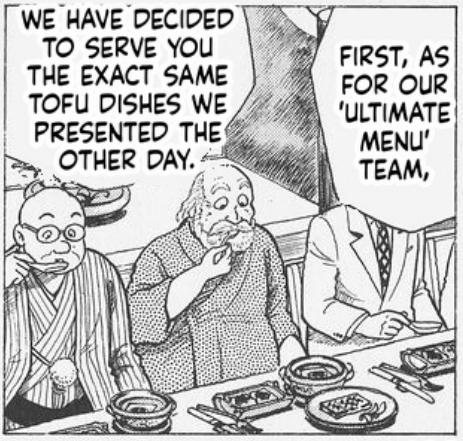

HMPH, A MAN WHO CAN'T EVEN SWAT THE FLIES OFF HIS OWN HEAD HAS NO RIGHT TO ACT SO HIGH AND MIGHTY ABOUT OTHERS.
RECONCILING TOKUICHI AND HIS FATHER SO HIS SISTER CAN GET MARRIED, INDEED...
THAT SHIRO... HE MADE A COMPLETE FOOL OUT OF ME...
AS IF I GIVE A DAMN ABOUT TOKUICHI'S FAMILY PROBLEMS!
IF TOKUICHI COULD HAVE CONTINUED MAKING TOFU WITH HIS FATHER FROM NOW ON, THEIR RECONCILIATION WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE...
UNFORGIVABLE...!
AND THEN SHIRO WOULD GET TO SAY THAT HIS TOFU WAS USED FOR BOTH DISHES.
IF THE MATCH HADN'T BEEN STOPPED THEN, THE JUDGES WOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT MY TOFU TASTED EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE'S.

CALL TOKUICHI!
Y-YES, SIR!


A FEW DAYS LATER —

10

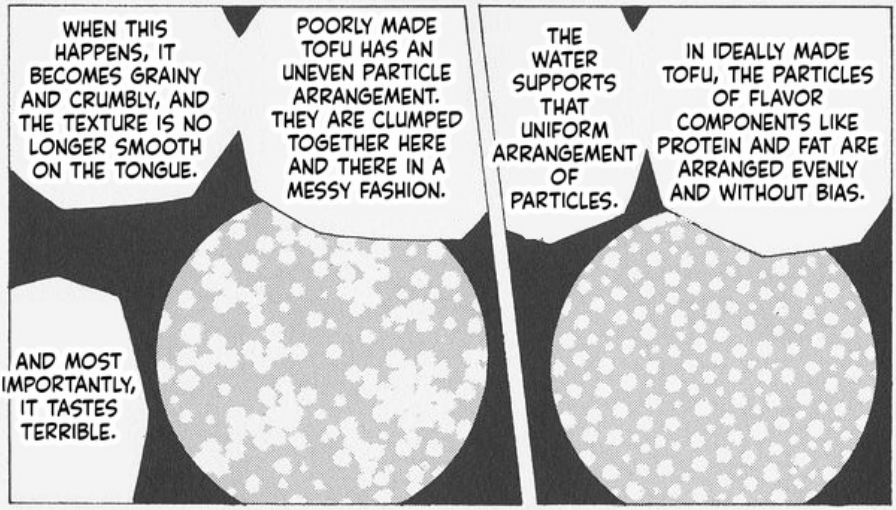

WE BELIEVE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GAIN A MUCH DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUE VALUE OF ULTIMATE TOFU.
WHILE YOU MAY NOT FEEL THE SAME FRESH SENSE OF SURPRISE THE SECOND TIME AROUND,

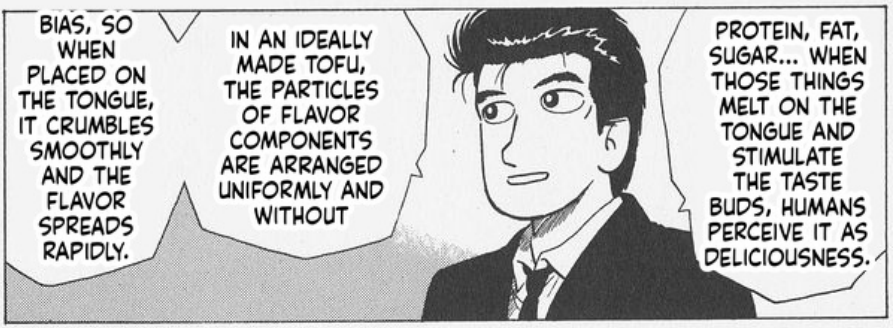

WE HAVE DECIDED TO SERVE YOU THE EXACT SAME TOFU DISHES WE PRESENTED THE OTHER DAY.
FIRST, AS FOR OUR 'ULTIMATE MENU' TEAM,

TASTING IT AGAIN LIKE THIS, I CAN REALLY FEEL IT DEEP IN MY SOUL.
LAST TIME, I WAS SO CAPTIVATED BY THE SOFTNESS AND TEXTURE THAT I FAILED TO SENSE THE FULL DEPTH OF ITS FLAVOR.
YOU'RE RIGHT, YUKO-CHAN.
NOW THAT I'VE NOTICED THE PROFOUND, SUBTLE TASTE I OVERLOOKED, IT'S TRULY EYE-OPENING.
WHEN I HAD THIS TOFU STEAK BEFORE, THE NOVELTY TOOK OVER AND I JUST WOLFED IT DOWN, AMAZED BY THE DELICIOUSNESS, BUT...
FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN MAKING DENGAKU, THE TRADITIONAL METHOD IS TO PLACE A CUTTING BOARD ON THE TOFU AND USE ITS WEIGHT TO SQUEEZE OUT THE WATER.
I CAME UP WITH THE ULTIMATE TOFU BECAUSE I WAS EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED WITH TRADITIONAL TOFU DISHES.
THIS IS NO GOOD.
COULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS 'ULTIMATE TOFU' FOR US NOW?
11
OF COURSE, DAN-SAN.

THINK BACK TO THE BASICS AND CONSIDER WHAT TOFU ACTUALLY IS.
NO MATTER WHAT TOFU COOKBOOK YOU LOOK AT, THEY ALL SAY TO PRESS IT WITH A WEIGHT TO SQUEEZE OUT THE WATER WHEN GRILLING OR STIR-FRYING.
WELL NOW... ISN'T THAT JUST THE FUNDAMENTAL RULE OF TOFU COOKING?
THIS WATER PLAYS AN EXTREMELY VITAL ROLE; THE TASTE OF THE WATER ITSELF DOMINATES THE FLAVOR OF THE TOFU.
THE VAST MAJORITY OF TOFU'S WEIGHT IS WATER.
HOWEVER, THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF WATER IS A PHYSICAL ONE.
IT IS A SUBSTANCE MADE BY SOLIDIFYING THE PROTEINS AND FATS FOUND IN SOY MILK.
BY ADDING A COAGULANT LIKE NIGARI TO SOY MILK EXTRACTED FROM SOYBEANS,

12


WHEN THIS HAPPENS, IT BECOMES GRAINY AND CRUMBLY, AND THE TEXTURE IS NO LONGER SMOOTH ON THE TONGUE.
POORLY MADE TOFU HAS AN UNEVEN PARTICLE ARRANGEMENT. THEY ARE CLUMPED TOGETHER HERE AND THERE IN A MESSY FASHION.
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT TASTES TERRIBLE.
THE WATER SUPPORTS THAT UNIFORM ARRANGEMENT OF PARTICLES.
IN IDEALLY MADE TOFU, THE PARTICLES OF FLAVOR COMPONENTS LIKE PROTEIN AND FAT ARE ARRANGED EVENLY AND WITHOUT BIAS.


BIAS, SO WHEN PLACED ON THE TONGUE, IT CRUMBLES SMOOTHLY AND THE FLAVOR SPREADS RAPIDLY.
IN AN IDEALLY MADE TOFU, THE PARTICLES OF FLAVOR COMPONENTS ARE ARRANGED UNIFORMLY AND WITHOUT
PROTEIN, FAT, SUGAR... WHEN THOSE THINGS MELT ON THE TONGUE AND STIMULATE THE TASTE BUDS, HUMANS PERCEIVE IT AS DELICIOUSNESS.

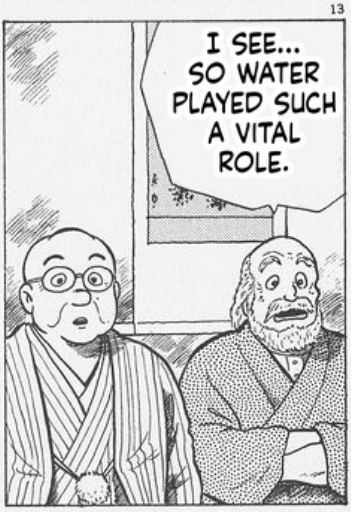
EASILY ON THE TONGUE, IT TAKES TIME FOR THE FLAVOR TO REACH THE TASTE BUDS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, IN POORLY MADE TOFU, THE FLAVOR PARTICLES CLUMP AND STICK TOGETHER, SO THEY ARE INEVITABLY LARGER. SINCE THEY DON'T MELT
IN SHORT, IT MEANS YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO FULLY EXPERIENCE THE FLAVOR.

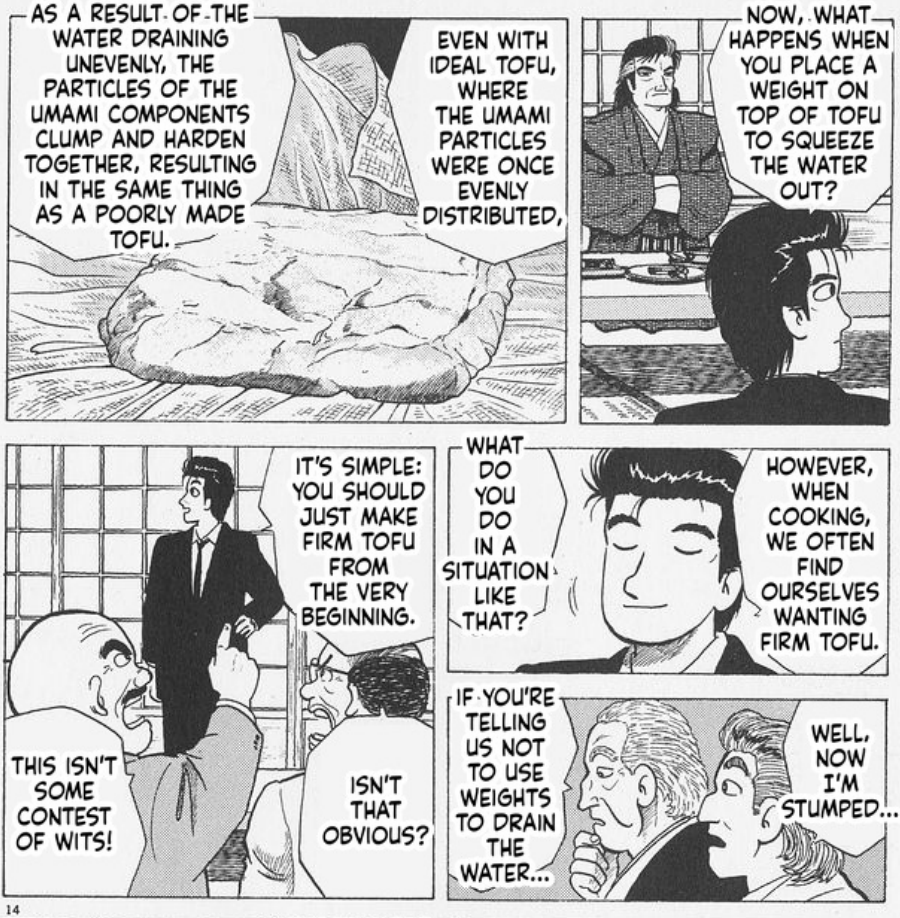
THEREFORE, YOU CAN EXPERIENCE EVERY SINGLE BIT OF FLAVOR INSTANTANEOUSLY.
FURTHERMORE, BECAUSE EACH INDIVIDUAL FLAVOR PARTICLE IS INDEPENDENT, THEY MELT QUICKLY.

13

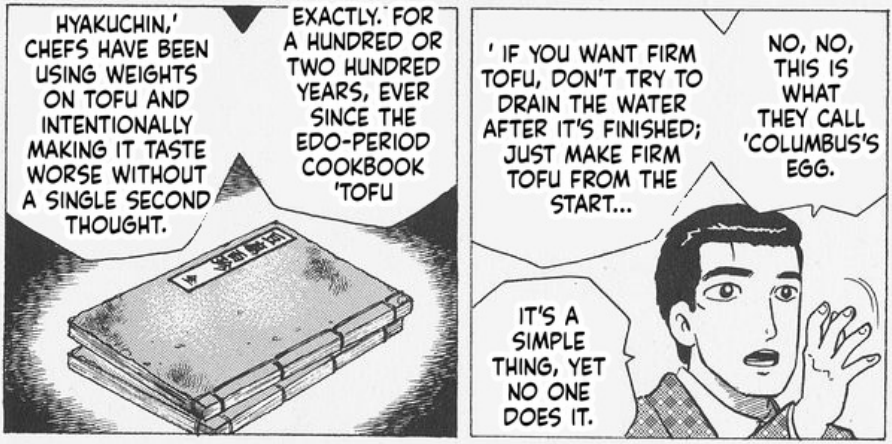
SO IT ACTS AS A SUPPORT TO ENSURE THE FLAVOR COMPONENTS ARE DISTRIBUTED EVENLY.

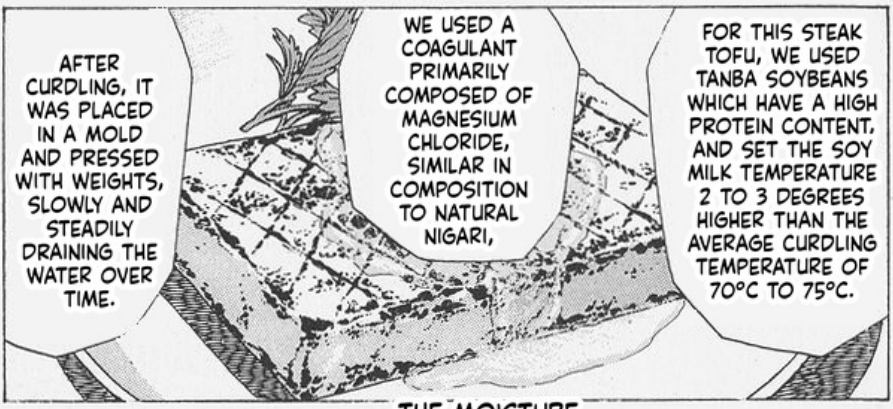
BUT BECAUSE THE FLAVOR COMPONENTS MELT COMPLETELY AND QUICKLY ON THE TONGUE...
SO, FEELING THAT SMOOTH TOFU TASTES BETTER WASN'T AN ILLUSION,

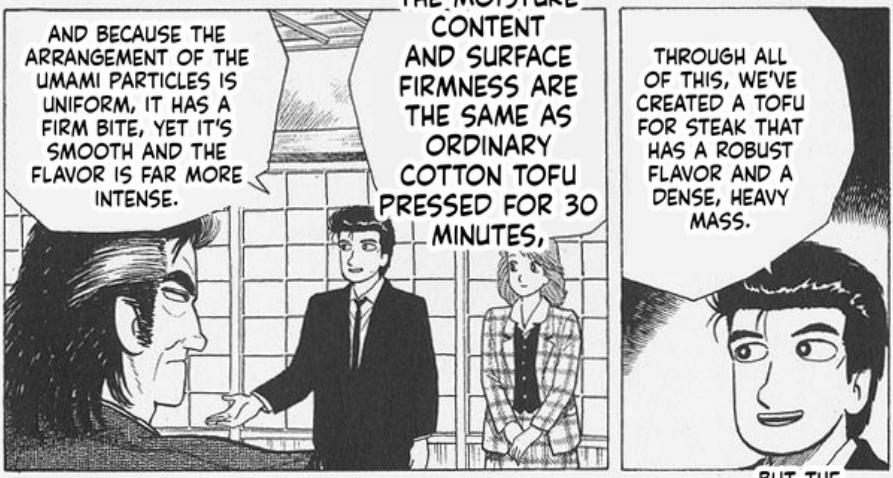

I SEE... SO WATER PLAYED SUCH A VITAL ROLE.

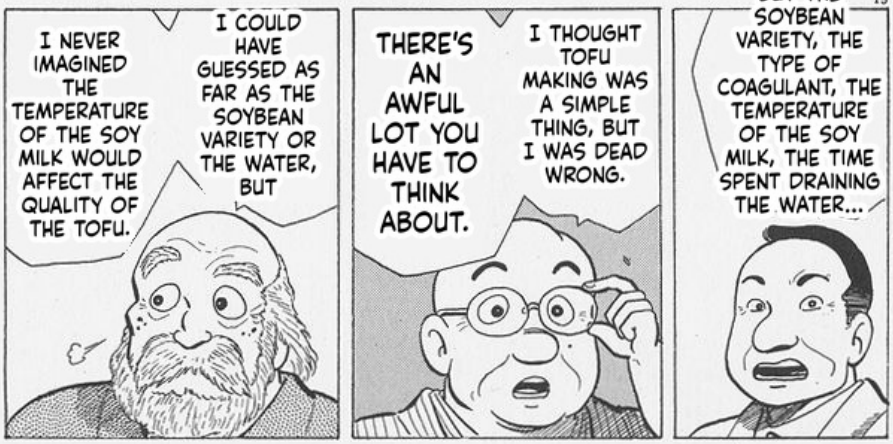

AS A RESULT OF THE WATER DRAINING UNEVENLY, THE PARTICLES OF THE UMAMI COMPONENTS CLUMP AND HARDEN TOGETHER, RESULTING IN THE SAME THING AS A POORLY MADE TOFU.
EVEN WITH IDEAL TOFU, WHERE THE UMAMI PARTICLES WERE ONCE EVENLY DISTRIBUTED,
NOW, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PLACE A WEIGHT ON TOP OF TOFU TO SQUEEZE THE WATER OUT?
IT'S SIMPLE: YOU SHOULD JUST MAKE FIRM TOFU FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
THIS ISN'T SOME CONTEST OF WITS!
ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS?
WHAT DO YOU DO IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT?
HOWEVER, WHEN COOKING, WE OFTEN FIND OURSELVES WANTING FIRM TOFU.
IF YOU'RE TELLING US NOT TO USE WEIGHTS TO DRAIN THE WATER...
WELL, NOW I'M STUMPED...

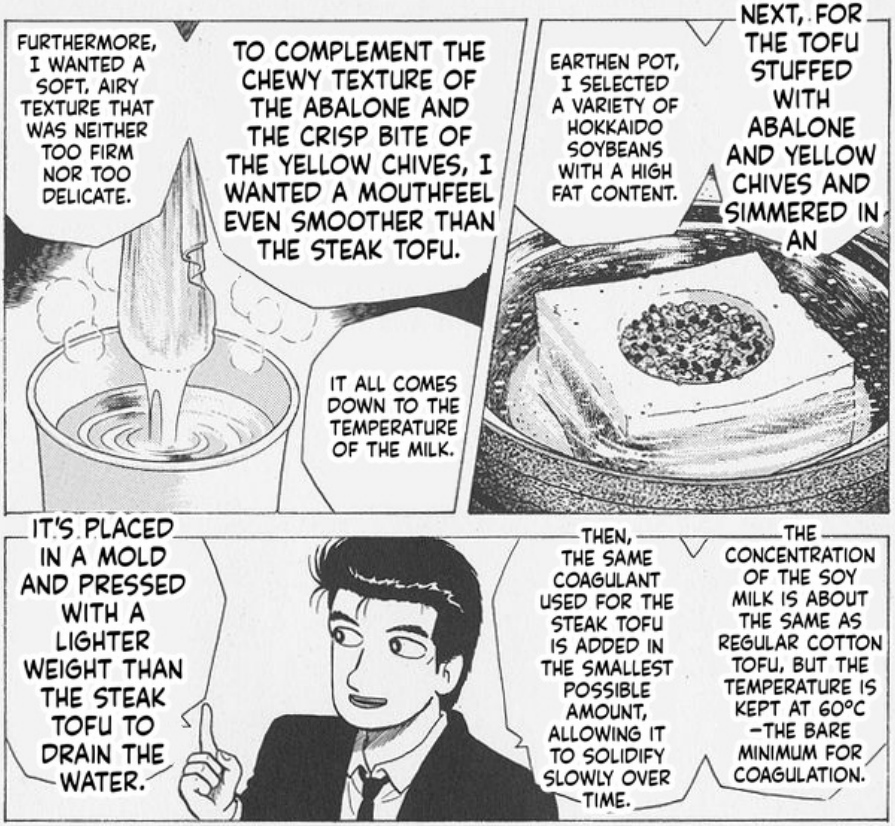
14


HYAKUCHIN,' CHEFS HAVE BEEN USING WEIGHTS ON TOFU AND INTENTIONALLY MAKING IT TASTE WORSE WITHOUT A SINGLE SECOND THOUGHT.
EXACTLY. FOR A HUNDRED OR TWO HUNDRED YEARS, EVER SINCE THE EDO-PERIOD COOKBOOK 'TOFU
' IF YOU WANT FIRM TOFU, DON'T TRY TO DRAIN THE WATER AFTER IT'S FINISHED; JUST MAKE FIRM TOFU FROM THE START...
NO, NO, THIS IS WHAT THEY CALL 'COLUMBUS'S EGG.
IT'S A SIMPLE THING, YET NO ONE DOES IT.

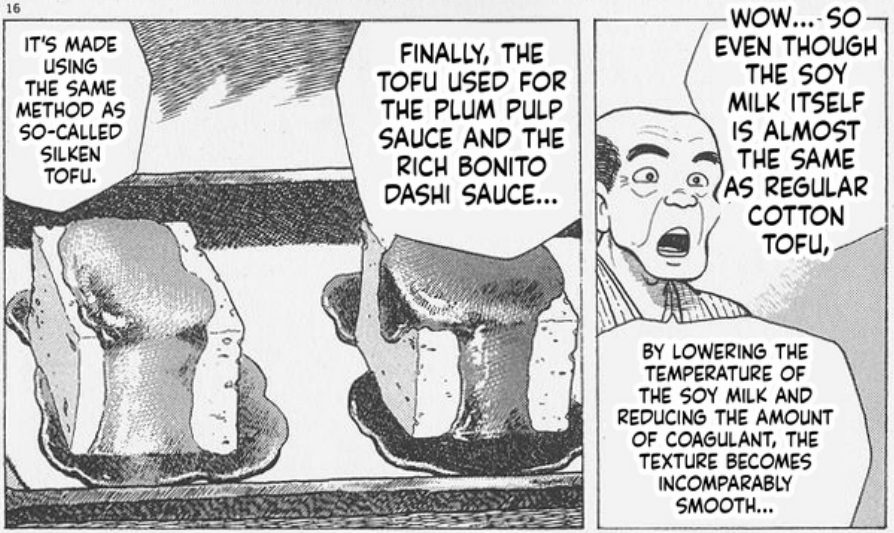

AFTER CURDLING, IT WAS PLACED IN A MOLD AND PRESSED WITH WEIGHTS, SLOWLY AND STEADILY DRAINING THE WATER OVER TIME.
WE USED A COAGULANT PRIMARILY COMPOSED OF MAGNESIUM CHLORIDE, SIMILAR IN COMPOSITION TO NATURAL NIGARI,
FOR THIS STEAK TOFU, WE USED TANBA SOYBEANS WHICH HAVE A HIGH PROTEIN CONTENT, AND SET THE SOY MILK TEMPERATURE 2 TO 3 DEGREES HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE CURDLING TEMPERATURE OF 70°C TO 75°C.

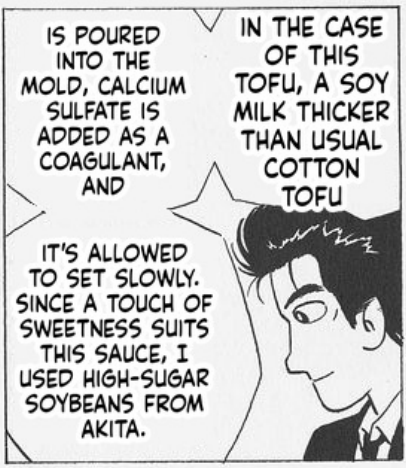

AND BECAUSE THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE UMAMI PARTICLES IS UNIFORM, IT HAS A FIRM BITE, YET IT'S SMOOTH AND THE FLAVOR IS FAR MORE INTENSE.
THE MOISTURE CONTENT AND SURFACE FIRMNESS ARE THE SAME AS ORDINARY COTTON TOFU PRESSED FOR 30 MINUTES,
THROUGH ALL OF THIS, WE'VE CREATED A TOFU FOR STEAK THAT HAS A ROBUST FLAVOR AND A DENSE, HEAVY MASS.

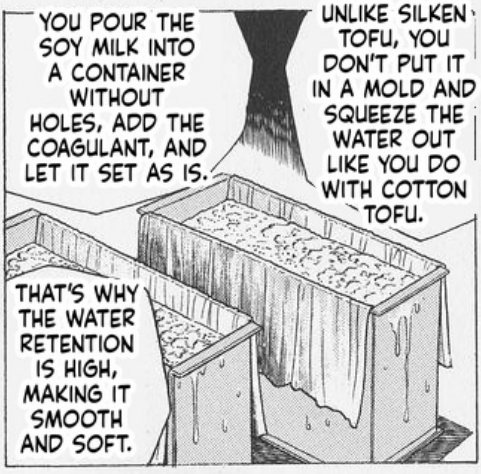

I NEVER IMAGINED THE TEMPERATURE OF THE SOY MILK WOULD AFFECT THE QUALITY OF THE TOFU.
I COULD HAVE GUESSED AS FAR AS THE SOYBEAN VARIETY OR THE WATER, BUT
THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT.
I THOUGHT TOFU MAKING WAS A SIMPLE THING, BUT I WAS DEAD WRONG.
BUT THE SOYBEAN VARIETY, THE TYPE OF COAGULANT, THE TEMPERATURE OF THE SOY MILK, THE TIME SPENT DRAINING THE WATER...


FURTHERMORE, I WANTED A SOFT, AIRY TEXTURE THAT WAS NEITHER TOO FIRM NOR TOO DELICATE.
TO COMPLEMENT THE CHEWY TEXTURE OF THE ABALONE AND THE CRISP BITE OF THE YELLOW CHIVES, I WANTED A MOUTHFEEL EVEN SMOOTHER THAN THE STEAK TOFU.
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THE TEMPERATURE OF THE MILK.
EARTHEN POT, I SELECTED A VARIETY OF HOKKAIDO SOYBEANS WITH A HIGH FAT CONTENT.
NEXT, FOR THE TOFU STUFFED WITH ABALONE AND YELLOW CHIVES AND SIMMERED IN AN
IT'S PLACED IN A MOLD AND PRESSED WITH A LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN THE STEAK TOFU TO DRAIN THE WATER.
THEN, THE SAME COAGULANT USED FOR THE STEAK TOFU IS ADDED IN THE SMALLEST POSSIBLE AMOUNT, ALLOWING IT TO SOLIDIFY SLOWLY OVER TIME.
THE CONCENTRATION OF THE SOY MILK IS ABOUT THE SAME AS REGULAR COTTON TOFU, BUT THE TEMPERATURE IS KEPT AT 60°C —THE BARE MINIMUM FOR COAGULATION.

16


IT'S MADE USING THE SAME METHOD AS SO-CALLED SILKEN TOFU.
FINALLY, THE TOFU USED FOR THE PLUM PULP SAUCE AND THE RICH BONITO DASHI SAUCE...
WOW... SO EVEN THOUGH THE SOY MILK ITSELF IS ALMOST THE SAME AS REGULAR COTTON TOFU,
BY LOWERING THE TEMPERATURE OF THE SOY MILK AND REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF COAGULANT, THE TEXTURE BECOMES INCOMPARABLY SMOOTH...


IN THE CASE OF THIS TOFU, A SOY MILK THICKER THAN USUAL COTTON TOFU
IS POURED INTO THE MOLD, CALCIUM SULFATE IS ADDED AS A COAGULANT, AND
IT'S ALLOWED TO SET SLOWLY. SINCE A TOUCH OF SWEETNESS SUITS THIS SAUCE, I USED HIGH-SUGAR SOYBEANS FROM AKITA.

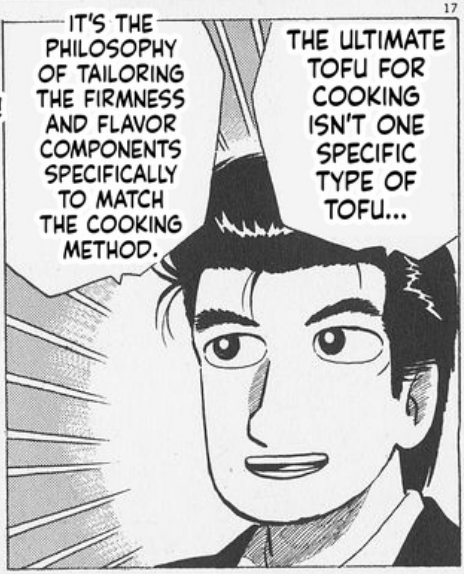

YOU POUR THE SOY MILK INTO A CONTAINER WITHOUT HOLES, ADD THE COAGULANT, AND LET IT SET AS IS.
UNLIKE SILKEN TOFU, YOU DON'T PUT IT IN A MOLD AND SQUEEZE THE WATER OUT LIKE YOU DO WITH COTTON TOFU.
THAT'S WHY THE WATER RETENTION IS HIGH, MAKING IT SMOOTH AND SOFT.

BECAUSE ALL THE RICHNESS OF THE THICK SOY MILK REMAINS, IT'S SMOOTH AND SOFT, YET THE FLAVOR AND AROMA ARE INTENSE.

17

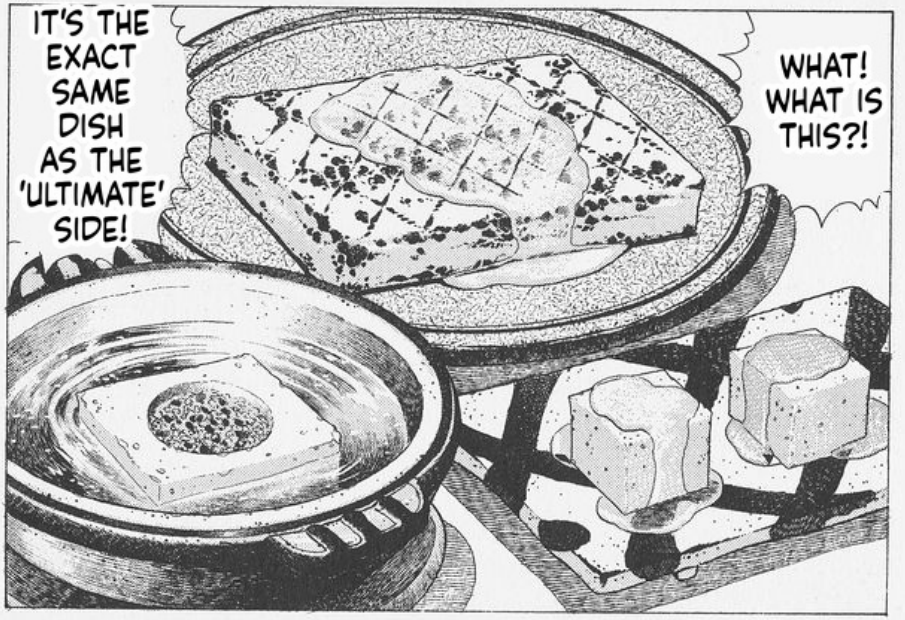
SIMPLY MAGNIFICENT!

THE TRUE ESSENCE OF TOFU HAS FINALLY BECOME CLEAR!


IT'S THE PHILOSOPHY OF TAILORING THE FIRMNESS AND FLAVOR COMPONENTS SPECIFICALLY TO MATCH THE COOKING METHOD.
THE ULTIMATE TOFU FOR COOKING ISN'T ONE SPECIFIC TYPE OF TOFU...

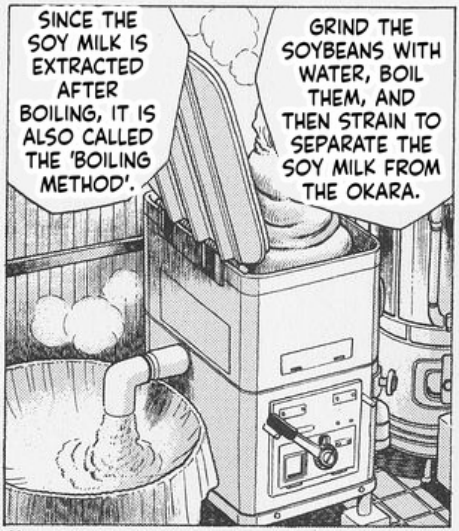
FIRST, PLEASE HAVE A TASTE.
NOW, WE ASK THE 'SUPREME' SIDE TO PROCEED.
WHAT?!
MM.....

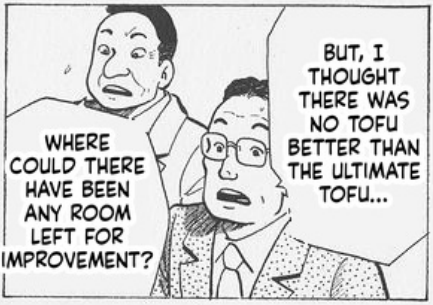
18


IT'S THE EXACT SAME DISH AS THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE!
WHAT! WHAT IS THIS?!

NOW, NOW, PLEASE WAIT UNTIL YOU'VE TASTED IT BEFORE WE TALK.
HEY NOW, YUZAN, IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS...?!
WHAT IS HE PLANNING...?
WHOA! LOOK AT THE DIFFERENCE IN FLAVOR!
19
OHO! THIS IS FAR FROM A JOKE!
IT'S THE SAME DISH, YET THE 'SUPREME' VERSION IS MORE DELICIOUS!
THE FLAVOR IS LIGHT AND PURE! SUCH AN ELEGANT TASTE!
HOW COULD THIS BE...?!
....
DAMMIT...!

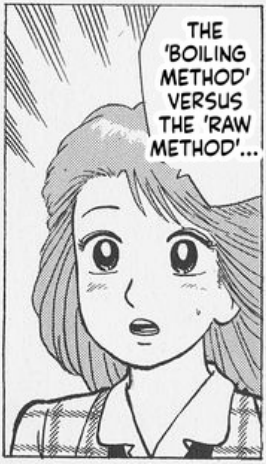
HOWEVER, THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE SEEMS QUITE CONFIDENT... BY SERVING THE SAME DISH, IT HAS INSTEAD FORCED A HARSH COMPARISON BETWEEN THE 'SUPREME' AND THE 'ULTIMATE'.
THEREFORE, WE DECIDED TO MAKE THE EXACT SAME DISH THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE MADE LAST TIME.
WHEN THE REMATCH WAS DECIDED THE OTHER DAY, VOICES WERE RAISED SAYING THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE WAS AT A DISADVANTAGE FOR SHOWING THEIR HAND FIRST.

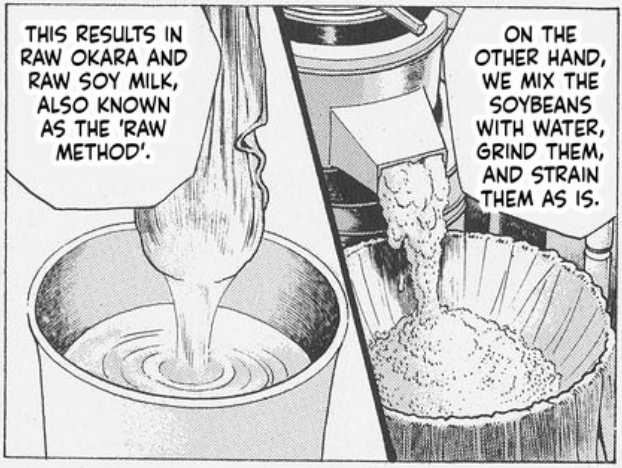

SINCE THE SOY MILK IS EXTRACTED AFTER BOILING, IT IS ALSO CALLED THE 'BOILING METHOD'.
GRIND THE SOYBEANS WITH WATER, BOIL THEM, AND THEN STRAIN TO SEPARATE THE SOY MILK FROM THE OKARA.


WHERE COULD THERE HAVE BEEN ANY ROOM LEFT FOR IMPROVEMENT?
BUT, I THOUGHT THERE WAS NO TOFU BETTER THAN THE ULTIMATE TOFU...

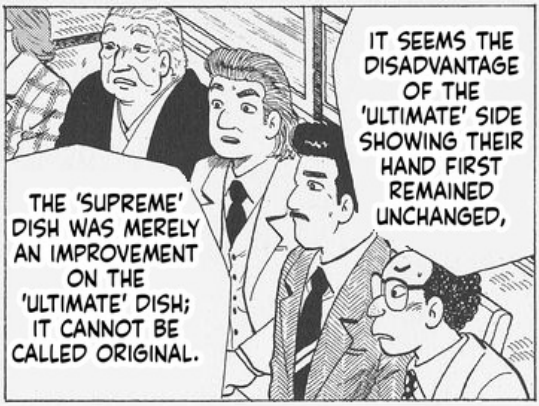
THIS IS HOW THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE MAKES THEIR TOFU.

20


THE 'BOILING METHOD' VERSUS THE 'RAW METHOD'...

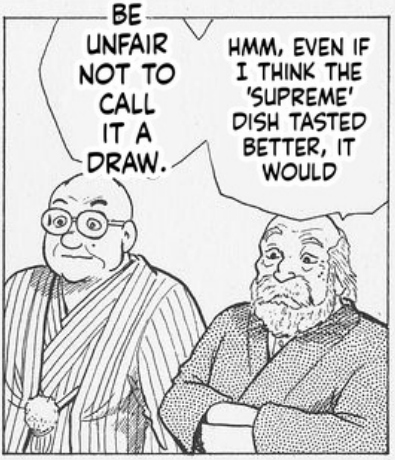

THIS RESULTS IN RAW OKARA AND RAW SOY MILK, ALSO KNOWN AS THE 'RAW METHOD'.
ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MIX THE SOYBEANS WITH WATER, GRIND THEM, AND STRAIN THEM AS IS.

SO WHILE THE FLAVOR IS RICHER, THE BEAN SKINS ARE ALSO BOILED, WHICH RELEASES UNNECESSARY HARSHNESS.
IN THE CASE OF THE 'BOILED-EXTRACTION METHOD,' THE OKARA IS BOILED ALONG WITH IT.
BECAUSE ONLY THE SOY MILK IS BOILED, THE RESULT IS AN EXTREMELY PURE, REFINED, ELEGANT, AND LIGHT FLAVOR.
IN OUR 'RAW-EXTRACTION METHOD,' WE BOIL IT ONLY AFTER IT HAS BEEN TURNED INTO SOY MILK.
MAN, TOFU REALLY IS A DEEP SUBJECT!
TO THINK THAT SUCH SLIGHT CHANGES IN THE RECIPE AND PROCESS COULD ALTER THE FLAVOR OF TOFU THIS MUCH!
I SEE! NOW IT ALL MAKES SENSE!
21
LET'S HAVE THE RESULTS OF THE JUDGING ANNOUNCED.
AND NOW...

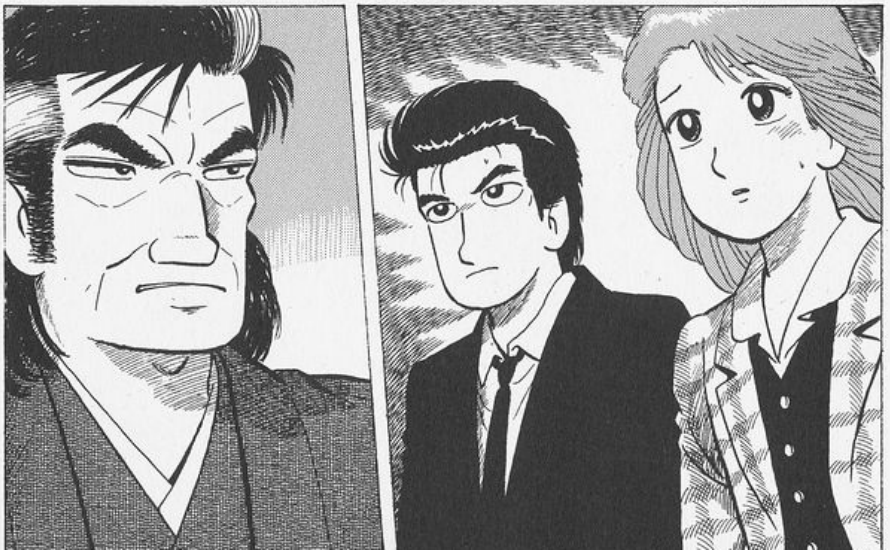

IT SEEMS THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE 'ULTIMATE' SIDE SHOWING THEIR HAND FIRST REMAINED UNCHANGED,
THE 'SUPREME' DISH WAS MERELY AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE 'ULTIMATE' DISH; IT CANNOT BE CALLED ORIGINAL.

I WILL ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS FIRST.
SO FOR THIS TOFU CHALLENGE, I DECLARE IT A DRAW!

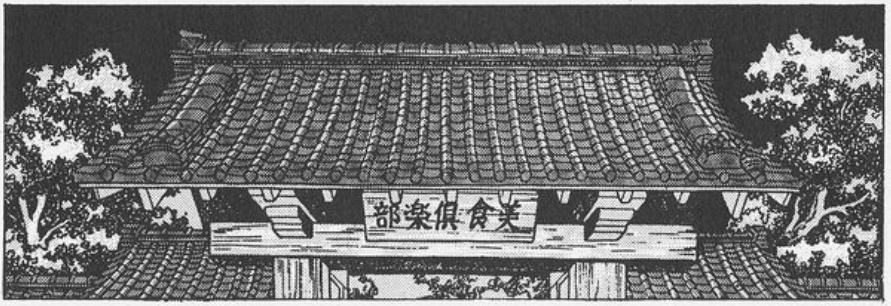
WE MISSED THE WIN, BUT MANAGED TO AVOID DEFEAT...
ううん...

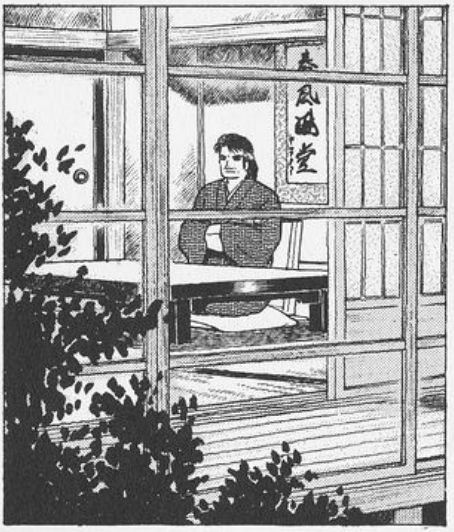

HMM, EVEN IF I THINK THE 'SUPREME' DISH TASTED BETTER, IT WOULD BE UNFAIR NOT TO CALL IT A DRAW.

IF KAIBARA YUZAN HAD MADE A DIFFERENT DISH WITH THAT SUPREME TOFU, WE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE LOST...



TAKAKO'S BROTHER HAS FINALLY COME BACK HOME.
OPEN
K&B Coffee & Home
NOW TAKAKO CAN GET MARRIED WITHOUT ANY WORRIES.
I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU.
MASTER KAIBARA HIMSELF TOLD MY BROTHER TO COME HOME AND MAKE TOFU EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE GOURMET CLUB.
I'LL KILL YOU WITH A BLOCK OF TOFU, YOU BASTARD!
YAMAOKA!
ぐぐぐ…
YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR SOMEONE BETTER THAN ODA.
SINCE YOU'RE FINALLY ABLE TO GET MARRIED, TAKAKO,





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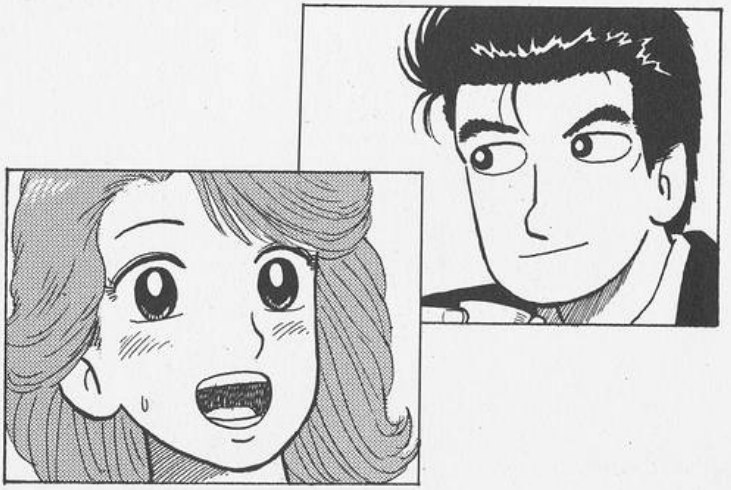

美味(おい)しんぼ32 —新・豆腐勝負—

ビッグ コミックス

ISBN4-09-182632-6

1991年11月1日初版第1刷発行 （検印廃止）

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花咲アキラ

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Akira Hanasaki 1991

発行者 相賀徹夫
印刷所 凸版印刷株式会社

Printed in Japan

発行所 (101-01)東京都千代田区一ツ橋二の三の一
振替(東京8－200) TEL 編集(3230)5505 業務(3230)5331 販売(3230)5749
株式会社 小学館

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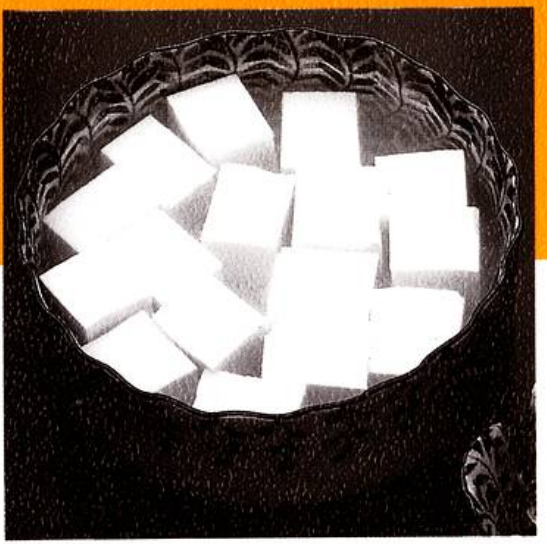

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